

**High-level Africa Regional Review Meeting  
in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs  
29-30 May 2023  
Gaborone, Botswana**

**Gaborone Outcome Document**

**Introduction**

1. We, the Ministers and representatives from Landlocked Developing countries (LLDCs), gathered in Gaborone, Botswana on 29 -30 May 2023 for the High-level Africa Regional Review Meeting in preparation of the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024, to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (VPOA) in the Africa Region, including identification of achievements, gaps, constraints, emerging challenges and opportunities, sharing of best practices, experiences and innovative approaches for accelerated post-COVID-19 recovery and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs, and identifying of appropriate policy measures and concrete action-oriented recommendations at the national, regional and global levels necessary for making the successor programme of action for LLDCs a truly transformative one, especially in contributing to the acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Developing Goals (SDGs) in African LLDCs.

2. We welcome the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations agencies, international, regional, and sub-regional organizations, and the private sector.

3. We reaffirm the global commitments to addressing the special needs of the LLDCs made at major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and our commitment to the goals and aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063.

4. We welcome with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Rwanda to host the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, in Kigali.

**Assessment of progress**

5. We note with great concern the fragile and highly uncertain global socio-economic outlook, persisting negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, geo-political tensions and current multiple crises, which increase pressure on inflation, energy and food prices, finance, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, constraining the ability of LLDCs to achieve the priorities of the VPoA and SDGs.

6. We note that LLDCs' existing transport related vulnerabilities were exacerbated further during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 related trade and transit restrictions resulted in

high costs, supply chains disruptions and increased transportation times. As a result, LLDCs exports fell drastically, at a rate higher than the global average.

7. We note that since the launch of the VPoA some progress has been made to close missing links and expand transport infrastructure in the African LLDCs. However, despite the progress, road and rail transit transport networks remain largely constrained both in quality and quantity due to the high scale of investment needed for infrastructure development and maintenance, inadequate skilled human resources and new technologies.

8. We note that over the review period, several African countries, including some LLDCs, have either built new airports or rehabilitated several old ones. In addition, the African Union launched the Single African Air Transport Market in January 2018 that seeks to fully liberalize market access to intra-African air transport services. Air carrier departures from the African LLDCs, had increased by 15.6% between 2014 and 2017. However, we note that the air transport industry was hard hit by COVID-19 and LLDCs have still not been able to fully recover from this. Improving and harmonizing the air transport industry in LLDCs will require massive investments to expand and modernize infrastructure, increase use of digital technologies and to rehabilitate and replace aged fleet.

9. We note that access to ICTs in LLDCs has increased over the review period. African LLDCs have witnessed a significant increase in mobile cellular subscriptions, which grew by 65% from 9.3 million in 2014 to 15.3 million in 2021. The use of internet in Africa increased from 27% in 2019 to 33% in 2021, while in the LLDCs the number of internet users increased from 29% in 2019 to 35% in 2021. We underscore that although this represents a significant improvement, it is still far below the world average of 63%.

10. We recognize that African LLDCs continue to face major constraints in fully harnessing the benefits of the digital economy that includes infrastructural gaps, relatively high cost of ICT services, in particular broadband services, low digital literacy rates, poor quality regulation and high cost of accessing submarine cables. It is critical that the high costs of broadband in African LLDCs are reduced.

11. We note that infrastructure in LLDCs for production, transmission and distribution of modern and renewable energy services has been expanded and upgraded but more than 60% of the African LLDCs population still does not have access to electricity and the rural-urban supply gap remains significant. However, the development of energy infrastructure, including for renewable energy is largely constrained by lack of funding and the pace of completion of power projects remains slow.

12. We recognize that LLDCs' participation in regional and sub-regional trade, transport and transit facilitation agreements and initiatives aimed at deepening regional integration, enhancing infrastructure connectivity, and facilitating movement of cargo across borders has increased.

13. We remain concerned that implementation of agreements and initiatives that promote trade facilitation such as the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions remains low

and has been negatively impacted by measures introduced by transit countries and LLDCs during COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. We note that during the VPOA implementation period, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was established and entered into force on 30 May 2019, to further deepen regional integration and also note that all Africa's LLDCs ratified the agreement. The agreement is envisioned to result in reduced tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff barriers and more importantly expected to ease trade facilitation hurdles among the African LLDCs since it contains provisions on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation. Furthermore, African countries who ratified the AfCFTA have consented to liberalize up to 97% of tariff lines on intra-African trade in fifteen years' time.

15. We note that African LLDCs' quest to deepen regional integration has been severely constrained by lack of capacity especially in implementing ratified trading protocols, supply side constraints, lack of complementarity of goods, multiple membership, macroeconomic instability and shortage of key infrastructures such as transport, water and energy.

16. We express concern at the continued marginalisation of African LLDCs' in global trade. African LLDCs' share of merchandise exports in global exports has remained low over the review period at 0.24% in 2021, that is, 0.01% drop since the adoption of the VPOA in 2014. We are further concerned that merchandise exports from African LLDCs remained undiversified and largely comprise of primary commodities.

17. We recognize that the importance of services in the global and national economy has been increasing. However, the African LLDCs' share of exports of services to the global share of exports in services remained marginal at 2% for five straight years, that is, 2014 – 2019 and then dropped marginally to 1.6% and 1.7% in 2020 and 2021, respectively. The tourism sector which is one of the main contributors to LLDCs' services export revenue was hardest hit by COVID-19 and the recovery is slow.

18. We recognize that over the review period, progress on structural transformation by African LLDCs has been slow due to low investment flows and subdued local investors which have undermined efforts towards value addition, technology and innovation. We also observe that over 90% exports from African LLDCs have remained largely concentrated in raw materials and the contribution of African LLDCs to global trade remained flat at around 0.2%.

19. We note that during the review period, the LLDCs have been adversely affected by climate change, the increasing frequency and intensity as well as the number and scale of disasters and their devastating impacts, which have resulted in massive loss of life, food insecurity and famine, biodiversity loss, water-related challenges, decline in forest area as a proportion of total land area, displacement, humanitarian and development needs and long-term negative economic, social and environmental consequences, especially for those in vulnerable situations throughout the world, including LLDCs, undermining the implementation of the VPOA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of its Sustainable Development Goals.

20. We note that total external financial resources received by African LLDCs from Official Development Assistance (ODA), Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and remittances, shows an upward trajectory from the year 2014 when VPOA was launched. In 2021, a total of \$7.3 billion in FDI was received, a real increase of 3% since the VPOA was launched. This amounted to 0.45% of total global FDI inflows. ODA has demonstrated as a major source of capital to African LLDCs.

21. We also note that since the launch of the VPOA, FDI into African LLDCs maintained an upward trend except for the year 2020 when FDI inflows dropped to \$4.9 billion due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

22. We note that, while African LLDCs received \$21.5 billion in 2020, in ODA, a real increase of 34.3% since the adoption of the VPOA, ODA was unevenly distributed among them, however, the trend has not been adequate to support a long-term recovery and provide impetus to LLDCs' key development goals.

23. We note that in 2022, the African LLDCs received \$8.7 billion in remittances, which was \$1.7 billion more than was received by the group in 2014.

24. We also note that during the period under review, ODA has remained a major source of capital to African LLDCs, in comparison to the reported figures related to FDI and diaspora remittances.

#### **Call for action:**

25. We note that the world has changed drastically since the adoption of the VPOA in 2014 and since we adopted the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Without immediate course correction and acceleration of SDG implementation, the LLDCs are destined to face prolonged periods of crisis and uncertainty. We commit to implementing the calls to action in the present outcome document, at the national, regional and global levels and to accelerate progress on agreed policies, programmes and investments, while acknowledging that some of the calls to action will require capacity building and technical and financial assistance in order to be effectively implemented by LLDCs and transit developing countries.

26. We note that transport corridors are the backbone of transportation networks, linking major gateways and hubs and are an important means to enhancing LLDCs' connectivity to markets, achieving efficient transit, and reducing LLDCs' transport costs. We call on transit countries and development partners to provide effective and efficient transit transport corridors with good and well-maintained transport infrastructure, and smooth implementation of agreed legal frameworks, transit rules policies, safety and security measures, and transport and trade facilitation measures. We call for the promotion of railway transport interconnected with road transport and ports for more efficiency and to contribute directly to the decarbonisation of transport. We further call for the promotion of interoperable regional transport networks and multimodal transport systems.

27. We note that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in transport infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge. We call for enhanced international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, the allocation of more

resources from national budgets, the effective deployment of international development assistance and multilateral financing in the development and maintenance of infrastructure.

28. We call on international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, development partners to consider infrastructure funding window that will provide preferential funding to LLDCs on the continent.

29. We underscore the importance of capacity building in designing bankable projects and call on the UN system, development partners, multilateral development banks, international and regional organizations to provide capacity building support to LLDCs and transit countries on transport infrastructure development.

30. We call on the LLDCs, assisted by AUDA-NEPAD and RECs to prioritize projects that have greater impact on connectivity and digital innovations, that would translate to the economic development of LLDCs and other African states. We urge LLDCs to accelerate preparation of projects to bankability in order to scale up investment and ensure that there is a pipeline of bankable priority infrastructure projects for investment with a focus on smart projects that impact more on economic transformation.

31. We also call for the establishment of additional and bigger project preparation facilities on the continent that will support both the project preparation and capital investment for the development of a pipeline of transport infrastructure projects to improve the connectivity of the LLDCs.

32. We call for increased investment in rail infrastructure as it offers lower transit costs and shorter travel times than road transport.

33. We call for increased investments to improve air transport connectivity. We call upon the international community including the UN system and other international and regional organizations to provide support towards the recovery of the air transport industry which is faster and offer LLDCs with direct access to international markets.

34. We call for further liberalization of the skies through the full operationalization on the Yamoussoukro Decision within the framework of the Single African Air Transport Market, in order to allow LLDCs to grow their networks within Africa and beyond.

35. We encourage development partners, multilateral financial and development institutions and regional banks and the private sector to support LLDCs and transit countries to collaborate to establish ICT infrastructure, applications and services.

36. We encourage LLDCs to create enabling environment for research and development, and the development of viable strategies that could result in further competitiveness, investment and rapid reductions in the cost of information and communications technologies. We urge all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, inter alia, strengthened enabling policy environments at all levels, legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, public-private partnerships, universal access

strategies and international cooperation to improve affordability, education, capacity-building, investment and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.

37. We also encourage African LLDCs to develop new policies related to digital identity, data security and data privacy, among others with a view to benefit from the digital economies, especially through digital trade, including leveraging the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade.

38. We further encourage LLDCs to enhance their efforts to integrate into e-commerce. In this regard, we urge international partners to provide capacity-building to assist LLDCs in addressing gaps in legal and regulatory frameworks and developing digital skills.

39. We encourage African LLDCs to engage in all discussions that will shape international rules and regulations of e-commerce and the digital economy.

40. We also call upon the UN system, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa, working in collaboration with Afrexim Bank and African Development Bank to expedite efforts to support the development of digital trade on the African continent to accelerate the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

41. We encourage LLDCs to provide mechanisms to facilitate the deployment of networks and services in non-profitable areas for operators, whether public investment, public-private scheme, or other types of incentives. We call on development partners, the UN system, other international and regional organizations to provide capacity-building support to LLDCs to improve the business environment and the ability to attract and retain the private sector in the ICT.

42. We recognize that investments in renewable energy presents massive opportunities for African LLDCs and we encourage LLDCs and transit countries to create an enabling environment for energy investment and infrastructure operations.

43. We call upon the international community, including regional and international development banks, bilateral donors, the United Nations system, the International Renewable Energy Agency and other relevant stakeholders to scale up investments and technical support to promote renewable energy on a wider scale in LLDCs in order to overcome rural-urban and gender disparities, and increase overall access to clean cooking fuels and electricity. In particular LLDCs should be supported to strengthen their capacities for planning, implementing and monitoring renewable energy policies and for developing bankable projects in order for them to take full advantage of climate funding for energy projects. African LLDCs also need support to increase investments in improving energy efficiency.

44. We encourage regional organizations to develop regional policies and implementation processes that facilitate cross-border energy cooperation and we also encourage regional utility organizations such as power pools in partnership with regional development banks to scale-up investments into regional power generation and transmission projects to ensure that cross-border electricity interconnections are available, uninterrupted, reliable and cost-efficient.

45. We encourage African LLDCs to intensify the implementation of Rural Electrification Programmes to promote Universal Access to electricity that are funded through public private partnerships and national fiscal mechanisms. We note the need to scale up initiatives such as the light-up Africa initiative.

46. We call upon LLDCs, transit countries and their trading partners to further enhance implementation of their obligations under all relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives and we call on development partners, private sector and relevant international and regional and sub-regional organization to enhance support to LLDCs and transit developing countries to implement these agreements.

47. We recognize the need for innovative approaches to treat in a holistic manner, the issues of transit, transport and trade facilitation and call on the international community to support LLDCs to address the limitations arising from the rising transport and logistic costs that are hampering their effective participation in regional value chains using their comparative advantages.

48. We further call on the international community to support LLDCs and transit countries with the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, giving special consideration to the areas identified by LLDCs as requiring assistance including human resources and training, legislative and regulatory framework, information and communication technology and infrastructure and equipment, enhanced freedom of transit, fees, and formalities, border crossing cooperation and technical cooperation.

49. We call upon the members of the World Trade Organization to strongly commit to addressing the marginalization of LLDCs in international trade and to improve their effective and equitable participation in the multilateral trading system. We further call on enhanced market access including through addressing non-tariff barriers in key markets for LLDCs, addressing tariff escalations, and the elimination of trade barriers that are inconsistent with WTO Agreements. We also call for enhanced support to LLDCs to meet international standards, as well as to benefit from WTO agreements.

50. We welcome the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement and note that its success hinges on improved financial integration, trade facilitation, conducive trade policies, regulations and mechanisms as well as reliable and resilient infrastructure.

51. We affirm determination to target diversification of LLDCs' economies as a key part of our development strategies, including through the implementation of the AfCFTA. In this context, there is also need to step up investments in sustainable recovery to enhance growth, create decent jobs and accelerate intra-regional trade through the effective implementation of the AfCFTA.

52. We call on LLDCs to make efforts to accelerate deeper market integration at the regional and continental levels by effectively implementing the AfCFTA, as this paves the way for greater facilitation of movement of goods and services, as well as people across the regional blocs and ultimately the continent, given that the key tenets of the WTO TFA are embedded in market integration provisions, with African LLDCs being the key beneficiaries. We call on LLDCs to

implement policy measures aimed at building productive capacity as this is key in fostering intra-African trade, stimulating the much-needed manufacturing and economic development.

53. We encourage LLDCs to continue to formulate policies and strategies aimed at diversifying their export structure and adding value to their exports in order to expand their participation in sustainable regional and global value chains.

54. We encourage LLDCs, with the support of UN agencies and development partners to strengthen their services sector by adopting enabling policies and a conducive business environment needed to strengthen and improve the resilience and sustainability of the services sector.

55. We call on the international community to support the LLDCs to advance structural economic transformation with a view to building productive capacity, focusing on increasing value addition in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, further integrating LLDCs into global and regional value chains, encouraging economic and export diversification and promoting formal and decent employment.

56. We underscore the need to establish policies that place emphasis on global value chains (GVCs) and regional value chains (RVCs) which are key in providing opportunities for firms to absorb new technologies, and rapidly expand their economies of scale, access international markets and therefore facilitate structural economic transformation.

57. We urge development partners, including the African Development Bank, UN-ECA, UN-OHRLS and other relevant UN entities to provide technical assistance to address the critical success factors for the development of RVCs and GVCs such as: technological upgrading; creation of appropriate enabling environment by the states; stable macroeconomic environment, robust financial markets and banking systems; provision of ICT and energy as key enablers of industrialization; and removal of key binding constraints (mainly provision of skills, finance and infrastructure).

58. We invite African LLDCs, with the support of RECs, to address the barriers to international trade in services so as to harness the development potential of their economies, which is key in improving economic performance and can provide a range of traditional and new export opportunities vital for structural transformation.

59. We encourage the use of special economic zones (SEZs) in African LLDCs as a vehicle for industrialization and to leverage on the opportunities coming with the AfCFTA, and call on development partners such as RECs, ECA, UNDP, African Development Bank to collaborate with African LLDCs in the establishment of SEZs.

60. We note with concern that, during the implementation period of the VPoA, African LLDCs were hit by several climate-induced disasters ranging from heatwaves, cyclones, floods and droughts and that these events, besides the tragic loss of life and displacement of population that they cause, also weaken infrastructure (including rail, roads, hydropower plants, homes, schools and public buildings), and impose a direct cost on transit trade, which consequently puts constraints on the African LLDCs' capacity to compete on the global market. We also note with



great concern that LLDCs suffered disproportionately high human and economic losses from these disasters and acknowledge the compounded socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

61. We reaffirm our commitment to address climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities and national circumstances and we call on Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthening resilience in African LLDCs.

62. We urge developed country parties to the UNFCCC to fully deliver on the goal of 100 billion United States dollars urgently and through to 2025 and emphasize the importance of transparency in the implementation of their pledges. We welcome the outcomes of COP-27 held in Sharm El-Sheikh, including the decision on funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage.

63. We agree on the need to consolidate our positions in the discussions on climate change and formalize our Group of LLDCs under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, in order to enhance our coordination, project a strong voice and work with relevant stakeholders to advance the interests of LLDCs in climate related issues, especially with regard to vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and we call on the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) to be held in United Arab Emirates, in November 2023, to consider the impact of climate change on LLDCs in the deliberations and outcome.

64. We welcome the High-Level Meeting on the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 held on 18-19 May 2023 in New York; and recognize the urgency of implementing the Sendai Framework as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, including the calls to action contained in the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting. We acknowledge the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction policies and strategies in the follow-up framework to the VPOA across crucial economic, environmental, development and climate aspects, in alignment with the Sendai Framework and the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

65. We acknowledge the need to urgently undertake necessary measures to improve resilience building in LLDCs, embed disaster risk reduction, scale up investments for structural economic transformation and strengthen the means of implementation, such as access to disaster data, technology transfer and capacity development. We further acknowledge that financing for disaster risk reduction presents a considerable challenge to the implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in the LLDCs and call for all public and private, domestic and international investment, as well as bilateral and multilateral support, to be risk-informed and aligned with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies including understanding of risk through risk analytics and multi-hazard early warning systems.

66. We encourage partnerships to strengthen the understanding of climate risk and more broadly systemic risk and its application in decision-making in the LLDCs, including through disaster risk reduction education, comprehensive risk management, building academic and scientific capacity,

utilization of frontier technologies, and supporting traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices.

67. We invite climate finance providers to improve access for LLDCs and encourage the allocation of more resources to ex-ante instruments for building resilience, including new financing approaches which incentivize disaster risk reduction and sustainable reduction of LLDCs' vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters.

68. We recognize that domestic resource mobilization is key to achieving the VPOA, SDGs and Agenda 2063. However, this is being seriously impacted by the lingering impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises, including the geopolitical tensions. We commit to enhancing efforts towards taxation, savings, and financial inclusion, with a view to enhance self-reliance and reducing inequalities. We stress the importance of ensuring conducive policy and regulatory frameworks and transparency, both in the national and global context, including for financial institutions, development banks and other relevant agencies in this respect.

69. We reiterate the need to strengthen international cooperation on tax matters, and welcome the recent adoption by the General Assembly, of the Resolution on the Promotion of Inclusive and Effective International Tax Cooperation. We look forward to the beginning of intergovernmental discussions in New York at the United Nations headquarters on ways to strengthen the inclusiveness and effectiveness of international tax cooperation through the evaluation of additional options including the possibility of developing an international tax cooperation framework or instrument through a United Nations intergovernmental process, taking into full consideration existing international and multilateral arrangements.

70. We reiterate our call on donor countries to fulfill their ODA commitments and provide 0.7% of their gross national income to the developing countries by 2030, with particular focus on LLDCs. We also call upon them to ensure quality and effectiveness of aid, especially through predictability and accountability in alignment with the national priorities of the recipient countries. We call upon the development partners to provide enhanced financial and technical support to the LLDCs, in line with their national priorities, including for impactful projects and capacity building.

71. We call upon development partners to support the implementation of integrated national financing frameworks, such as blended finance, public-private partnerships, and impact investments, to mobilize resources for sustainable infrastructure development and diversification of African LLDCs economies.

72. We call for new financial instruments that harness the potential of digital innovations for the financing of the SDGs, including digital financing platforms, innovative digital services, Micro-Small and Medium- sized Enterprises (MSMEs) digitization and domestic resource mobilization. We also call for a dedicated financing mechanism that delivers catalytic investment capital for MSMEs and small investment projects in African LLDCs to mobilize sustainable private investments that advance the SDGs and act as a crisis facility to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises, as well as support resilience building for future shocks and crises.

73. We underscore the need to enhance access to affordable and long-term financing for African LLDCs by strengthening cooperation with international financial institutions, regional development banks, and private sector investors.

74. We further reiterate the need for strengthening financial inclusion and capacity-building initiatives to improve financial literacy and promote entrepreneurship in African LLDCs.

75. We commit to redouble efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion and corruption through strengthened national regulation and increased international cooperation, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the strengthening of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows. We reiterate our call for enhanced global partnership and collaboration for adopting measures to prevent the transfer of stolen assets abroad, recover and return of stolen assets, and identify good practices for the return of stolen assets.

76. We are concerned that the external debt stock and debt service of many African LLDCs has drastically increased, resulting in 3 African LLDCs being in debt distress as of February 2023 and additional 4 African LLDCs at high risk of debt distress. We acknowledge the efforts of the global community to deal with the evolving debt crisis, including the G-20 Common Framework for Debt Treatment, but recognise its limitations in terms of scope and participation of creditors to bring about a lasting solution to the debt issues. We call upon development partners to take effective measures to reduce unsustainable debt levels owed by African LLDCs, including through debt cancellation and restructuring of existing high debt.

77. We call for improved debt management and responsible lending and borrowing, including by providing financing on more concessional terms by official creditors and ensuring that lending practices are fully in line with sustainable financing practices. We call on bilateral and multilateral development partners to use new instruments like debt swaps and state-contingent lending, taking into account risks beyond the control of LLDCs like conflicts, natural hazards and climate risks. We also call for technical assistance and capacity building for LLDCs to strengthen their debt management.

78. We call upon development partners, Multilateral Development Banks and the IMF to introduce new and comprehensive debt relief initiatives for African LLDCs. We also call upon creditors, both public and private, for additional effective measures to facilitate financing of our economic development, including access to grants and concessional resources for investment in critically needed infrastructure and development projects to avoid further indebtedness. We also call upon them to take into consideration the structural constraints and longer-term investment requirements of the LLDCs for the implementation of the SDGs.

79. We call for the reform of the international financial architecture to allow African countries, including LLDCs, to gain access to resources more easily and at a lower cost from multilateral and regional financial institutions.

80. We welcome the SDG Stimulus Fund launched by the UN Secretary-General, to address both short-term urgencies and the need for long-term sustainable development finance, through a

significant increase in financing for sustainable development, to the tune of at least US\$500 billion per year, to be delivered through a combination of concessional and non-concessional finance.

81. We welcome the continued support provided to LLDCs by UNECA, working with other key regional partners, in the efforts to realize sustainable, inclusive development and ultimately to meet the priorities of the next programme of action. We urge them to enhance supports towards the achievement of the development agenda of African LLDCs, through development planning, macroeconomic policy and economic governance, and public finance.

82. We request the UN-OHRLLS in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant United Nations system and other international organizations, United Nations Resident coordinators to extend necessary support to the LLDCs in the implementation of the new programme of action in coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and building on the achievement and lesson learnt from the Vienna Programme of Action other development frameworks, through raising global awareness, mobilizing international support and resources in favor of the LLDCs, building multistakeholder partnerships and reaching out to all stakeholders, including by establishing partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to enhance support for the LLDCs. In this regard, we strongly urge the Secretary-General and the Member States to strengthen the UN-OHRLLS to enable it to provide substantive support to LLDCs in their pursuit to meaningfully engage in the intergovernmental discussions and implement the programme of action for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda.

83. We stand ready to partner with all relevant stakeholders to work towards addressing the interlinked challenges faced by LLDCs. The preparatory process of the Third UN Conference for LLDCs, other major events to be held in the course of the year, such as the SDG Summit, the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, and COP28, present us with opportunities to work towards a transformative successor programme of action to the VPOA, as it is our mutual interest to do so.

84. We note the importance of mainstreaming new priorities to into national development and call on UN-OHRLLS to conduct training on mainstreaming of the new programme of action for LLDCs at the national level.

85. We stress the need for a robust follow up and review mechanism on the implementation of the new PoA that will monitor and track implementation and achievement of goals and call on UN-OHRLLS to support these efforts.

86. We call upon all States Members of the United Nations, and members of specialized agencies, in particular landlocked and transit developing countries and donor countries, as well as of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in the Conference, at the highest level possible.

87. We submit this outcome to the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee Session and will be inputs to the outcome document of the Third UN Conference of the LLDCs.

## **Vote of thanks**

88. We express our profound gratitude to the people and the Government of the Republic of Botswana for organizing and hosting this meeting. We also express appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Botswana in its dual capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs and Coordinator for trade and development issues of the Group of LLDCs in Geneva.

89. We express gratitude to the substantive and organizational support of the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, and the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Botswana.

90. We note with appreciation the active participation and substantive contributions of the LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners, UN system organizations, multi-lateral and regional development banks, other international and regional organizations, development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders.