STATEMENT

BY

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FIRST SECRETARY

PERMANENT MISSION OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE SECOND COMMITTEE DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEM 23: GROUP OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

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Please check against delivery.
Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me begin by aligning my statement with those delivered by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Zambia on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries.

2. We also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for his informative reports on the agenda item for discussion today, in particular, A/70/305 on sub item (b) on Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. We further welcome his recommendations contained therein.

Mr. Chairman,

3. It is almost a year since Landlocked Developing Countries converged in Vienna, Austria where they adopted a robust and forward looking Vienna Programme of Action for the Decade 2014 - 2024, which contains six priority areas covering amongst others Infrastructure Development and Maintenance, Trade Facilitation, Structural Economic Transformation and Means of Implementation.

4. Further to that, in June of this year, LLDCs convened in Livingstone, Zambia at a High Level Meeting on a follow-up to Vienna and concluded by adopting the Livingstone Call for Action for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

5. As we forge forward with the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development complemented by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, it should be borne in mind that on account of geography alone, Landlocked Developing Countries face challenges that isolate them from global markets. The 32 landlocked countries worldwide face unique but similar challenges.
6. For countries like Botswana these challenges are not only compounded by being a Landlocked Developing Country, but further by being classified as a Middle Income Country.

Mr. Chairman,

7. As highlighted in the Secretary General’s report, despite average annual economic performance being generally favourable for LLDCs over the past decade, these countries continue to face major development challenges.

8. LLDCs continue to fair poorly in the social development sphere and are at most serious risk of not achieving internationally agreed development goals including the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals.

9. The enormity of the constraints LLDCs face varies. Transport costs in comparison to the coastal economies are constantly on the increase, while their trade volumes continue to be low. In addition, the majority of LLDCs’ economies are single commodity dependent and are not sufficiently diversified.

10. Food security and agriculture in these countries are also threatened by land degradation, desertification and climate change. Moreover, this Group is among categories of countries which is most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and is less capable of effectively embarking on mitigation and adaptation programmes.

11. Economic growth of LLDCs is uncertain due to their vulnerability to external shocks and to the volatility of commodity prices.

12. The prohibitive cost of setting up business in LLDCs is denying this group of countries critical investment. This contributes to further emaciation of the already narrow base of LLDCs’ economies.
13. LLDCs are also faced with a major disadvantage when it comes to attracting Foreign Direct Investment and this militates against their integration into the global trading system.

14. Increased level of development support to LLDCs is required in order for this group of countries to develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate movement of goods and services.

15. Increased capacity building, technical and financial assistance aimed at supporting development of road, rail and telecommunication networks as well as pipelines for water and energy infrastructure, would assist LLDCs in addressing the challenges they face.

16. We further call on international community and relevant organisations to integrate the VPoA in to their programmes of work. Full implementation of the VPoA will go a long way in ensuring that LLDCs achieve success in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

17. In conclusion Mr. Chairman, we look forward to the continued constructive engagement on the draft resolution on LLDCs this session and appeal for support in order to reach a successful conclusion on this item.

I thank you for your kind attention.