Fifteenth Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries
22 September 2016, 10:00-13:00
Conference Room 5, UN HQ, New York

Concept Note

**Theme:** Harnessing coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action

**Background**

The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) was adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Vienna, Austria in November 2014. The VPoA is holistic, ambitious and results-oriented development programme for the international community to address the challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries in a more coherent manner than before. It seeks to achieve rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth along with poverty eradication for sustainable development in the 32 landlocked developing countries. The VPoA encompasses six priority areas, namely: (i) Fundamental Transit Policy Issues; (ii) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance; (iii) International Trade and Trade Facilitation; (iv) Regional Integration and Cooperation; (v) Structural Economic Transformation; and (vi) Means of Implementation. The successful implementation of the VPoA will require not only renewed and strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, transit countries and development partners, but also enhanced support and partnership efforts with relevant international and regional organizations, between private and public sectors and stronger and widened North-South and South-South cooperation.

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), as the new overarching development framework. In July 2015, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) was adopted at the Third UN Conference on Financing for Development, as the means of implementation framework for the SDGs. Both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognize the special challenges and needs of LLDCs and underscore the importance of the implementation of the VPoA. The World Leaders noted that the VPoA is integral to the 2030 Agenda. All the 17 SDGs are relevant for the LLDCs in their pursuit of sustainable development. In addition, the 2030 Agenda has specific references to LLDCs, including in 3 SDGs: Goal 7 on energy; Goal 9 on infrastructure and sustainable industrialization and Goal 10 on reducing inequality. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda reaffirms the need to address the special challenges and needs of LLDCs in structurally transforming their economies, harnessing benefits from international trade, and developing efficient transport and transit systems. It stressed need for technical assistance and improvement of trade-and transit-related logistics in LLDCs, to address
gaps in trade, transport and transit-related regional infrastructure, connecting LLDCs and proposed a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap.

There are other recent global development frameworks that are relevant to the LLDCs and vital for their achievement of the SDGs. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a landmark agreement resolving to enhance the provision of urgent and adequate finance, technology and capacity-building support to the developing countries. Its effective implementation will help the LLDCs to build their resilience to climate change impacts such as desertification, land degradation, recurrent droughts, and flooding, including glacial lake outburst floods. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls for enhanced provision of coordinated, sustained and adequate international support for disaster risk reduction to the LLDCs.

The Nairobi Package agreed at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference includes Ministerial Decision on the elimination of agricultural export subsidies which is particularly significant in improving the global trading environment for the LLDCs. The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, agreed at the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, aims at further expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit and thereby significantly cutting the costs of trade. As such, it will have a great impact on effective transit procedures and when fully implemented will be beneficial for the LLDCs. Furthermore, the outcome of the Fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIV) includes provisions for LLDCs in the future planned work of UNCTAD (to be confirmed).

The effective implementation of the VPoA is instrumental for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and for achieving sustainable development in the LLDCs. It is therefore vital for the LLDCs that the VPoA and the SDGs, as well as other global development frameworks, are implemented in a coherent and integrated manner to effectively achieve the goals of the programmes. Mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda and the VPoA in a coherent manner into national development planning is important as it will help capitalize on the synergies for effective implementation. At the global level, it is critical that LLDC issues and the priorities of the VPoA are integrated into the global development follow-up processes.

**Objectives of the meeting**

The key objectives of the 15th Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs are to i) review the progress in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; ii) share ideas, lessons learned and best practices on mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action; iii) make recommendations on how to foster coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action at the national level in LLDCs, as well as regional and global levels.

**Expected Outcomes**

The Ministerial Meeting is will reinforce the political commitment to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and is expected to come up with policy recommendations on how to foster coherence in the implementation and follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and other global development frameworks to ensure optimal benefits for the LLDCs.
The meeting will adopt a Ministerial Communiqué of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries.

**Participation**

The 15th Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs will be attended by Ministers and High-Level officials from the 32 LLDCs. Ministers and high-level officials from transit developing countries, development partners and representatives of UN system and other international and regional organizations will also be invited to participate.

**Documentation**

i. The Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024
ii. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
iii. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda
iv. The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement
v. Outcome of the WTO 10th Ministerial Conference
vi. Paris Agreement on Climate Change
vii. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030
viii. Outcome Document of the UNCTAD XIV
ix. Geneva Declaration adopted by the Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs