



**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
(UN-OHRLLS)**

Statement by

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at the

**Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and
Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs**

**4 October 2017
Conference Room 11, UN HQ**

Distinguished colleagues,

Friends,

I am very pleased to be with you and welcome you to our fifth inter-agency consultative group meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs.

It is the first time I chair this meeting and it is great to be together in one room.

As in my introductory remarks yesterday with the IACG for LDCs, I am here very much looking forward to hearing from you, to learning from you and especially to working closely together with as partners united around our shared goal of providing the best possible support to the LLDCs for achieving what the Vienna Programme of Action calls for.

I believe that inter-agency collaboration and coordination are a very important undertaking for the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

I also want to reiterate that you can count on my personal and my office's commitment to dialogue, working in genuine partnership so that together we strengthen even more our partnerships or build new ones.

Together we must identify priority action areas and activities and it is together that we must undertake them.

The Vienna Programme called on UN-OHRLLS as the coordinator, or if you wish facilitator, for the follow-up to and effective monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme.

OHRLLS is also tasked to undertake advocacy efforts, raise awareness of LLDCs issues and support the mobilization of international support and resources for the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

This is a priority for us and we will continue our focus on coherence in the follow-up and monitoring processes of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme, as well as other global agreements and processes. I look forward to our dialogue in this regard.

I must also express my appreciation to all of you and to your organizations for the attention you give and continue to give to the development concerns of the LLDCs and your contributions towards the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

As I said earlier, I genuinely look forward to listening to you about what we can do together to further our efforts and what we can undertake together to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action and integrate it into your overall programmes of work.

At the regional and global levels, I know that ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, UNCTAD as well as a number of UN agencies have already taken formal steps to mainstream the VPoA.

I believe that is a fundamental step and a step in the right direction we all could and should follow.

I see OHRLLS' and my role as High Representative in a key critical area and that is that we **MUST** strongly promote and support the localization of the internationally agreed global frameworks from the SDGs to the VPoA.

As they say: think globally, act locally.

When I talk to member country representatives, I consistently hear about the great need at the national levels to mainstream the Programme into national development plans, strategies and implementation mechanisms.

I have worked for a considerable amount of time in various governmental policy and decision-making functions and I cannot stress enough how important it is in LLDC settings to translate global agreements and mechanisms to the realities of your national context.

Some countries have made good progress in this regard and have completed the mainstreaming process, while others have announced their ongoing efforts and future plans to do so.

Mainstreaming process also means that all the relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels get fully engaged in the implementation of SDGs and the Vienna Programme of Action. And I am not just talking about the public sector, we also need to mobilise the private sector and above all civil society.

We say we do not want to leave anyone behind so maybe we have to start with getting everybody involved.

My experience tells me this will be key to the successful implementation of agreements and especially the 2030 Agenda and Vienna Programme.

It is against this challenge that I wish to engage with all of you to find concrete action points and facilitate additional support for national level mainstreaming. For example, since I took up my appointment, I have discussed with UNDP

how we can best join hands to include mainstreaming of the VPoA when UNDP undertakes its SDG Mainstreaming activities in the LLDCs, through the MAPS process.

I hope we can openly exchange on how best our organizations can support the LLDCs to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action at the national levels and what it will take to report on its progress. That we can discuss how to do without creating yet another additional process but doing this in a way that is integrated with the follow-up processes of the 2030 agenda and other important agendas.

It is equally necessary that we give support to the LLDCs to mainstream their concerns into major United Nations processes in particular the HLPF, Financing for Development Follow-up, the Global Infrastructure Forum, WTO negotiations, meetings on South-South Cooperation and others. This is needed to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Since your last meeting, a number of international fora addressed issues relevant to the LLDCs.

In February, the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement came into force and now the rapid implementation of the Agreement is critical. It is important that we continue to work together to ensure that the LLDCs and transit countries that have not yet ratified also take that action and get on board. Only in this way can we maximize the impact of the Agreement.

In that same spirit, let us look forward to the upcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting of the LLDCs to be held in Argentina. I hope that as we prepare for it,

certain outcomes that are supportive to the trade expansion of the LLDCs can be agreed upon.

Within the UN itself, the 2017 Special Meeting of ECOSOC on “Innovations in Infrastructure Development and Promoting Sustainable Industrialization” was of special importance to LLDCs, as was the theme of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”.

Seven LLDCs presented their voluntary national reviews this year and six are slotted for next year’s session. The HLPF will continue to be an important forum for the LLDCs to bring up their special needs and we need to continue to support them in this endeavour.

The global infrastructure forum is another follow-up process that has great relevance to the infrastructure needs of the LLDCs. It is important that the Forum takes into account the special needs of the LLDCs.

OHRLLS also took advantage of the momentum created by various other global processes to bring the LLDC issues to the global stage. Some of the meetings where we advocated for the special needs of the LLDCs include: The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, held in May in China; the WTO Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade on “Promoting Connectivity”; Energy EXPO in Astana, Kazakhstan and the World Customs Organization Global Transit Conference in July.

This is not the moment to go into detail on these and other events.

I have asked the Director to give us a more detailed update a little later.

Today, we also have the Interim Director of the International Think Tank for LLDCs among us to share a brief update on the entry into force of the Agreement on the Establishment of the LLDCs Think Tank.

The Think Tank is the very first intergovernmental organization of the LLDCs, and a strategic tool and its full operationalization is a very important milestone for the Group of LLDCs.

Let me share that OHRLLS has activities lined up for the remainder of this year and beyond and we will discuss these in more detail later.

At this point, let me mention that the comprehensive mid-term review of the VPoA is coming up. We are looking ahead to late 2019 or early 2020 for holding of the mid-term review.

I have met with numerous Member States and heads of international organizations during the high-level week of the GA and impressed upon them the importance of their participation in the mid-term review, its preparations and the need for all stakeholders to be involved.

So, once more I encourage all of your organizations to start thinking of the preparations, how you can contribute to the review process and I count on all of you here to be strong advocates for this!

I would also like to call on your organizations to continue to provide targeted support, in your respective areas of expertise, to assist the LLDCs in the implementation of the Vienna Programme. The Vienna Programme of Action is ambitious. It is ambitious for the PEOPLE, the human beings in LLDCs.

We all must redouble our efforts individually and collectively if we want to give true meaning and above all result to “leave no one behind“.

Let us be that village that collaborates more and partners more. Let us work harder because that is what we owe the 480 million people living in LLDCs and who count on US to meaningfully improve their lives and live their dreams.

Let us leverage the combined UN system capacities to support LLDCs in raising global awareness of their challenges, their needs and their aspirations.

Let us work together to help them enhance their voice, their participation in relevant fora.

Let us work together to mobilize financial and technical support.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and partners

I am here to listen, to exchange and to discuss this morning :

- where we stand in our efforts towards implementation of the Vienna Programme and what we respectively have done since the last inter-agency meeting,
- what events and activities of importance to LLDCs are coming up later this year, and
- and especially what we can to better collaborate, to partner for the implementation of the VPoA, and in particular for the upcoming mid-term review.

Thank you and I look forward to productive exchanges.

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