Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

1. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretariat for the presentation of the documents for our consideration under the Agenda Item 23 (a) and (b).

2. Let me start by referring to agenda Item 22 (a): Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

3. While globalization is ever expanding and generating significant benefits, these are yet to be shared equitably. LDCs specifically have yet to reap the full benefits offered by globalization.

4. While the world economy has rebounded from Global financial crises faced in the past decade, LDCs’ economies, especially the commodity-exporting ones, continue to remain particularly challenged. While they too are experiencing growth, the GDP growth rate poses a serious risk to the 2030 timeline. In 2017, LDCs’ growth was estimated to have increased to 4.9 per cent, against more than 7 per cent average growth during the pre-crises period. The proportion of their population living on less than $1.90 per day was 33.7 per cent in 2013. At this pace of progress, poverty eradication is not likely to be achieved by 2030.

5. Climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, unprecedented human mobility and displacements continue to pose immense challenges and vulnerabilities to the development of LDCs. According to the IPCC Report, in order to avoid tradeoffs with SDGs caused by national budget constraints, improved access to international climate finance is essential for supporting adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development, especially for LDCs and SIDs. We underline the need for a quick resolution of the current stalemate in the approval and replenishment of the Green Climate Fund. We also call upon our development partners to further accelerate their contributions to fulfil the $100 billion yearly benchmark of the Fund. (IPCC Report 2018).
Mr. Chairman,

6. While 4 per cent increase (in real terms) in bilateral aid from the OECD DAC members in 2017 is a welcome development, aid predictability and alignment with LDCs national priorities is essential to sustainable implementation of development plans. We are concerned, that the share of ODA still remains at 0.09 per cent of the donors’ Gross National Income and only 6 countries reached the lower threshold of the ODA targets for LDCs. We call on development partners to fulfil and go beyond their ODA commitment of 0.15-0.20 per cent of GNI provided to LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

7. We welcome the establishment of the Technology Bank for LDCs and appreciate Turkey’s hosting of the Bank, as well the financial and in-kind contributions made by Turkey and other countries. We call on others to contribute to the technology bank.

8. We congratulate all countries that have achieved graduation in the 2018 Committee for Development Policy (CDP) review. However, we emphasize the need for tailored support for graduating and newly graduated countries. We underline the importance of that, in order to ensure a smooth transition, as well as a sustainable and irreversible graduation.

9. The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs is coming to an end by 2020. The Mid-term Review of the IPoA encourages the General Assembly to consider holding the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2021. We would request the Members of the Assembly to decide on holding the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs and its modalities during the current session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Let me now turn to Agenda item 22(b), Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation.

11. The Group of 77 and China would like to highlight the special development needs and challenges of Landlocked Developing Countries and in this regard, underlines the importance of timely, full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPOA) in synergy and coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
12. As we look forward to the comprehensive high-level mid-term review of VPOA in 2019, it is important to continue necessary preparations for the review conference, including the modalities as well as consultations for adopting an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration as decided by A/RES/72/232.

13. In addition to reviewing progress made by Landlocked Developing Countries, transit countries and development partners in the implementation of VPOA, the mid-term review should also be the occasion to share best practices and lessons learned, identify obstacles and constraints encountered, and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them. This mid-term review should also identify new challenges and emerging issues, and launch concrete and specific global initiatives to further accelerate the implementation of VPOA.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The development costs in the LLDCs is 20 per cent higher compared with coastal countries. Key developmental challenges facing these countries result from their landlockedness, remoteness from world markets and geographical constraints. These challenges pose serious impediments for productive capacity, industrialization and export earnings, private capital and investment inflow and domestic resource mobilization, affecting their overall sustainable development. Drought, desertification, frequent incidences of disasters and impacts of climate change further aggravate challenges facing LLDCs.

15. The Group underlines that infrastructure development plays a key role in reducing the cost of development for landlocked developing countries and that the development and maintenance of transit transport infrastructure, information and communications technology and energy infrastructure are crucial for LLDCs in order to reduce high trading costs, improve their competitiveness and become fully integrated into the global market.

16. The Group also underlines the importance of mainstreaming the VPOA in plans and programmes of LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, international monetary and financial institutions as well as of the United Nations system organizations, and calls for urgently fulfilling all the commitments made in VPOA across all the six areas of priorities. As we have already spent four years of implementation of VPOA, support measures, including ODA, technology transfer, including on concessional and preferential terms, investment and partnerships, need to be further strengthened, and also redoubled where necessary.
17. We welcome the full operationalization of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries in Mongolia as the first ever intergovernmental organization of the LLDCs and appreciate the progress made by the International Think Tank in conducting researches on issues of importance to those countries. We would like to invite member states, international organizations and the private sector, to provide voluntary financial and in-kind contributions to the International Think Tank for LLDCs.

18. I conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reiterating that the Group of 77 and China looks forward to working closely and constructively with our development partners during the deliberation and negotiation of the resolutions under this agenda item. We hope that it will result in enhanced support to LDCs and LLDCs in their efforts to implement their respective Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda in order to make their development gains sustainable, inclusive and meaningful.

I thank you.