

Please check against delivery



UN-OHRLLS

Statement presented by

**Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu,
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States**

at the side event

**SDGs and Climate change: Challenges and Opportunities for landlocked
developing countries**

to be held at COP24

**13 December 2018 at 13:15 to 14:45 in Pieniny Side Event Room 2, Area G
– Multipurpose
Katowice, Poland**

- Excellencies
- Distinguished Participants
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank UNFCCC for partnering with us on this important meeting on SDGs and Climate change: Challenges and Opportunities for landlocked developing countries.

This special event is aimed at discussing and sharing information on how climate change is affecting the overall development of the LLDCs and identifying ways of fostering stronger global partnerships to LLDCs towards their adaptation and mitigation needs. This is particularly important for their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we are all aware, the 32 Landlocked Developing Countries are considered to be part of the countries in special situations - because they have particular development challenges arising from landlockedness compounded by remoteness from world markets cumbersome procedures in transit and other risks resulting in high trade costs that constrains export earnings, private capital inflow, and domestic resource mobilization. As a result it is more difficult for the LLDCs to achieve sustainable development.

The international community adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the decade 2014-2024 to help address the special development needs of LLDCs. Climate change is making it hard for the LLDCs to achieve sustainable development.

The LLDCs are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Some of the major reasons for their high vulnerability include that: they are mostly located in dryland regions, where the impact of climate change are more pronounced; some of the LLDCs have a large proportion of their land under mountainous terrain and are impacted by melting of glaciers; they lack institutional, human capacity and resources to tackle these challenges; and they are too dependent on climate-sensitive resources such as agriculture, livestock, forestry, water, and fisheries.

According to the United Nations 2018 SDG Report the proportion of land area covered by freshwater bodies in LLDCs has declined by 4.7% over the last decade. For example Lake Chad has shrunk in the last fifty years due to high temperatures and droughts, putting those dependent on the water source, at risk of losing their primary water supply.

Climate change related natural disasters such as extreme precipitation events or increased storminess in landlocked developing countries and flooding in low-lying coasts in transit countries can weaken infrastructure including transport infrastructure, thereby affect transit trade, which consequently puts constraints on their capacity to compete on the global market.

Climate change has also exacerbated land degradation, desertification and deforestation. According to UNCCD, it is estimated that desertification and drought causes 12 million hectares of productive land to become barren every year. Such major impacts have negative impact on agricultural productivity.

The 2017 FAO report on the impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security stresses that natural disasters such as floods, persistent drought, storms, extreme temperatures, disease infestation and wildfires result in reduced production of crops and livestock in developing countries. It indicates that from 2005 to 2015 landlocked developing countries across the world suffered a US\$ 11.6 billion loss in crop and livestock production due to natural-hazard induced disasters. Many people do not have safety nets to cope with the impact of climate change. The safety net is migration. This in turn, must be addressed.

The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released this October confirms that climate change is running faster than we are – and we are running out of time.

It is important that we act now to invest in mitigating and eventually reversing the effects of climate change.

World leaders signed the Paris Agreement on climate change three years ago and pledged to stop temperatures rising by less than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to work to keep the increase as close as possible to 1.5 degrees. The effective implementation of the Paris agreement is now crucial.

There are also opportunities that can be harnessed to support the landlocked developing countries. Greater partnerships are required to support development of human and institutional capacities to effectively deal with climate change related challenges.

It is also critical for LLDCs to be supported to develop and implement the strongest possible Intended Nationally Determined Contribution to address climate change.

Support measures should look more closely at accelerating, simplifying and enhancing access to already existing financing mechanisms such as: the

adaptation fund, the global environmental facility, Green Climate Fund and others. It is encouraging to hear that the Green Climate Fund is taking steps to simplify access - accelerated and simplified access without sacrificing on accountability and transparency.

Let me also stress the need to ensure development of climate change resilient transit infrastructure for the LLDCs since transit infrastructure is the lifeline for enhanced connectivity of the LLDCs to the global market. Climate-change resilient transit infrastructure will add significant costs to current development efforts but, it provides a cost-effective opportunity in the long-run.

Although climate change is not a specific priority area in the VPoA, it affects most of the priority areas of the programme, including infrastructure development and maintenance and structural economic transformation, OHRLLS will continue to make a case that the LLDCs deserve special consideration and treatment to overcome their vulnerabilities that are being exacerbated by climate change.

In May we had a briefing on Climate Change and Migration for Landlocked Developing Countries where participants stressed the need for the midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action to take into consideration climate change issues.

I look forward to our discussion today to hear the different experiences at national level and by the partners working with landlocked developing countries. The outcome of this meeting is important and will help shape the inputs on climate change that would feed into the preparatory process of the midterm review.

Excellencies

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

I now wish to briefly update you on the ongoing preparations for the High-Level Comprehensive Mid-term Review of the Vienna Programme of Action to be held in 2019 as called for by the UN-General Assembly.

The preparatory process for the Midterm Review involves preparations at national, regional and global levels.

The LLDCs are preparing national reports on the implementation of the VPoA. Some countries have already submitted their national reports. This is very important because we must ensure strong national ownership for this process.

OHRLLS is closely collaborating with the United Nations regional commissions to organize the regional review meetings – for Euro-Asia, Africa and Latin America regions that are planned for the first half of 2019. The first regional review meeting will be held on 11 and 12 February 2018 at ESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok. The regional meetings will come up with rich, practical and comprehensive suggestions that will feed into the global level preparations.

The global level preparations involve preparations of thematic events including preconference events and the inter-agency substantive joint work. A number of preconference events have already taken place. For example, the Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Transport that was held in Astana, Kazakhstan in May 2018 marked the first event in this intensive preparatory process. The meeting's outcome document, the Astana Declaration, forms an important input into the preparatory process.

Other events that have been held include: events focused on SDG 7 sustainable energy; aviation; investment and structural transformation and export diversification. These events provided us with important recommendations to feed in the preparatory process.

OHRLLS, in collaboration with partners, is also planning to organize some preconference thematic events including promoting trade and transport corridors, ICT connectivity, and trade facilitation.

In New York we plan to organize a dedicated retreat bringing together LLDCs, transit countries and development partners to consult on the Midterm Review.

To conclude, I would like to express OHRLLS's full commitment to working with all development stakeholders to support the LLDCs to build their capacity to address climate change.

I thank you.