Closing Statement by

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at the Midterm Review of the Implementation
of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade
2014-2024 in the Euro-Asian Region

ESCAP HEADQUARTERS, Bangkok, Thailand

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Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to all convey my deep appreciation to the Chair and members of his Bureau of this meeting Mongolia, Nepal and Tajikistan for efficiently and capably steering our meeting over the past two days.

I wish to thank also thank all the participants for the dedication and for your active participation and contribution to the success of this meeting.

Congratulations on the outcome of this meeting. The adopted outcome document highlights and raises areas which are crucial for accelerating the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Euro-Asia regional assessment report, the outcome document and the presentations and discussions in this meeting have clearly outlined both the trends as well as the challenges that the region faces in implementing the Vienna Programme.

There was a convergence of opinion that tangible progress and notable achievements have been made on most of the priority areas in this region.

For example the high ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement by LLDCs and transit countries that are WTO members and the increased ratification of other relevant international conventions such as the TIR Convention and regional and sub-regional agreements means that the region is poised to yield greater improvements in transit time. Some of you presented impressive data showing reduction in transit time along transit corridors achieved during the review period.

The deepening of regional integration and cooperation with neighbouring transit countries achieved over the past five years evidenced by the Eurasian Economic Union, the Belt and Road Initiative, and several multilateral agreements that were shared in this room such as the China, Mongolia and Russian Federation economic corridor, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement; and the Chabahar Agreement to mention just a few.

The progress and notable achievements that have been made during the review period to close missing links, expand transport, energy and ICT infrastructure are commendable - in particular the various the projects that were inaugurated during the review period to improve transport, energy and ICT connectivity of the LLDCs.

We need to maintain and enhance these positive trends.

You also identified the areas where progress was slow. For example, I heard that progress towards structural economic transformation and export diversification in most LLDCs needed concerted efforts to accelerate progress.
You also identified areas of priority where accelerated progress is required in this region. You have thus established your regional position that will feed into the Midterm Review later this year.

I would like to encourage strong emphasis on partnerships and enhanced international support to ensure that we speed up the implementation of the Vienna Programme in this second half. Regular collection and analysis of data is important to monitor, review and report on the progress. I heard in the discussions that it was challenging to monitor some of the specific objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action because of lack of data. I appeal to all stakeholders to assist the LLDCs and transit countries to generate relevant and meaningful statistics needed to review and monitor the implementation of the VPoA.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I once again thank the bureau for facilitating the deliberations of this meeting.

I wish to also appreciate the participation of the co-facilitator and the Global Bureau of LLDCs. Special thanks also go out to UN ESCAP and UN ECE for co-organizing the meeting and to UN ESCAP for hosting the meeting.

Finally, as I indicated at the opening, this meeting marks the beginning of the regional review meetings of the comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action. The outcome document adopted today will provide valuable inputs into the preparatory process in New York. I also anticipate that this outcome will feed into the upcoming session of the ESCAP Commission.

The Africa regional review meeting will be held on 18 and 19 March in Marrakesh, Morocco and the Latin America regional review will be held in Asuncion, Paraguay in June.

I look forward to continue collaborating closely with you in this preparatory process. I wish to reassure you of UN-OHRLLS support to your endeavours.

I wish all of you returning home a safe journey.

I thank you for your kind attention.