
United Nations Authorities Underscore the Urgency of Supporting the Development of Landlocked Developing Countries with Concrete Actions

The midterm review meeting of Latin American countries regarding implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Decade 2014–2024 is taking place at ECLAC’s headquarters in Santiago, Chile.

(June 11, 2019) The [Midterm review meeting of Latin American countries preparatory to the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024](#) began today at ECLAC’s headquarters in Santiago, Chile with an urgent call by senior representatives of the United Nations and of various countries to accelerate progress on the priorities established for supporting, with concrete actions, the implementation of this Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in these nations.

The gathering – which will continue through tomorrow, Wednesday, June 12 – features the special participation of Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS); Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Doma Tshering, Permanent Representative of Bhutan to the United Nations and co-facilitator for the midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024; and Julio César Arriola Ramírez, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the UN and Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries.

Participants in the meeting will discuss a general overview of the progress made on implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the SDGs in the Latin American region, highlighting achievements, challenges and opportunities, and suggesting needed measures. In particular, substantive conversations are expected to be held on the advances made in areas such as transit policy, infrastructure, information and communications technologies, energy, trade facilitation and regional integration.

In her welcome remarks, Alicia Bárcena emphasized that landlocked developing countries face multiple challenges on their path towards sustainable development. That is why it is crucial to coordinate actions that work in these countries’ favor and help them improve their competitiveness and their populations’ quality of life, just as the United Nations system has promoted.

“The challenge is how to foster development and productive value chains among landlocked countries and more prosperous areas. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia and Paraguay have shown significant

progress in this first half of the Vienna Programme of Action, both on aspects linked to economic development as well as in the social arena. However, this progress is still insufficient... That is why it is necessary to deepen the collaboration of transit countries and obtain technical and financial resources to advance on coordinating actions at a national, regional and international level," ECLAC's highest authority underscored.

Bárcena explained that in the joint document specially prepared for this meeting (["Midterm Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 in Latin America and the Caribbean"](#)), which essentially refers to Bolivia and Paraguay, ECLAC and UN-OHRLLS highlight six priorities: critical matters regarding transit policy, the development and maintenance of infrastructure and energy services, the promotion of international trade and trade facilitation, the importance of regional cooperation and integration, the economic transformation of the productive structure, and the means of implementation.

In her remarks, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of UN-OHRLLS, Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, emphasized that today – this year – is a strategic moment in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Ms. 'Utoikamanu said "We must assess our progress, our failures, gaps, and above all identify the way forward. We must identify practical, workable and forward-looking ways and means to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are not separate goals they all are mutually reinforcing goals on which the clock is ticking and asking us to accelerate action."

In light of the midterm review, 'Utoikamanu indicated that there has been progress in terms of measures to facilitate trade and transit. For example, 24 out of 26 landlocked developing countries that are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. In the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, two landlocked countries and five transit countries have ratified this agreement, which is encouraging, she said.

Meanwhile, from a macro perspective, the trade integration of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) remains low, the UN authority added. The LLDCs account for less than 1% of global exports, she explained. In 2018, the share of global exports of the 34 transit countries was 22.7%. These figures hide the fact that exports remain concentrated around a few primary commodities and natural resources and still generate very little value-added. "This is a critical issue," she stated.

"We are halfway through the Vienna Programme of Action. It is clear that more needs to be done on many fronts to support the LLDCs. It needs to be done fast and with innovative ideas. And, the challenge at hand demands for us to work together. We must collectively work towards ensuring that the LLDCs and their peoples are not left behind," 'Utoikamanu underlined.



PRESS RELEASE

Convened by the UN General Assembly, the [comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the Decade 2014–2024](#) will take place in December 2019 in New York. In addition to the current meeting in Latin America, preparatory regional review meetings have already been held in the areas of Africa and Euro-Asia.

More information at www.cepal.org.

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