Please check against delivery

UN-OHRLLS

Statement by

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ʻUtoikamanu

High Representative
and
Under-Secretary-General

Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Closing Session

Friday 6 December 2019, Trusteeship Chamber

UNHQ, New York
Your Excellency, Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the General Assembly
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary General, it gives me a great pleasure to address this
Closing Session of the Comprehensive High-level Mid-term Review of the
Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing
Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

I would like to begin my remarks with words of gratitude to you, Mr. President, for
your strong leadership in this High-level Mid-term Review.

I also extend my deep appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Bhutan and
Austria, Ambassador Doma Tshering and Ambassador Jan Kickert for leading the
intergovernmental consultations that resulted in the political declaration
adopted yesterday.

I would like to convey my appreciation to all of you – Member States and all
stakeholders - for your outstanding contribution to the success of the Mid Term
Review.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In addition to the inter-governmental plenary, the mid-term review featured three
high-level panels on priority issues to the LLDCs and seven side events. They
provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss lessons learnt and propose
options to intensify action to accelerate progress in the implementation of the VPoA.

Concrete suggestions were made at the side events in the areas of ICTs and e-
commerce; enhancing transit, transport logistics and trade facilitation;
modernization of the transit process; deepening of regional integration; the important
role of the private sector; supporting the LLDCs to monitor VPoA and the SDGs;
and impact investing and innovative resource mobilization.

Major upcoming conferences next year that are of great significance to LLDCs were
highlighted – the second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the 12th World
Trade Organization Ministerial Conference; the 15th UNCTAD Quadrennial
Conference, and the 2020 UN Ocean Conference. It is important that these
conferences further consider and promote partnerships and initiatives in support of LLDCs.

During these two days, we capitalized on the unprecedented global consensus and momentum for the concerns and needs of landlocked developing countries.

The Political Declaration that you adopted symbolizes the renewed commitment of the international community to support the aspirations of the LLDCs on their path towards sustainable development. It is reflective of the solidarity, spirit of cooperation, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

I would like to share six key messages from the Review and the Political Declaration.

First, we must acknowledge our achievements made on the VPoA priorities in the last five years. We heard the success stories and lessons learnt. Let us build on these achievements.

Second, we identified the constraints and implementation gaps. One third of the LLDCs’ population still living in extreme poverty. Food insecurity persists. Infrastructure connectivity is incomplete. There are challenges in effective implementation of trade and transport conventions and agreements. Structural economic transformation is limited. Reliable, timely and comparable data are lacking. Capacity constraints persists. The impact of climate change, desertification, deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss, drought, receding glaciers are increasingly felt.

We determined that much more needs to be done. Such as through: measures to improve trade and transit transport, building of climate and disaster-resilient transport infrastructure, diversifying and adding value to production and export structures, creating enabling environments for private sector development as well as increasing the impact of foreign investment and promoting domestic capital markets.

Third – Substantial financing and capacity development are required to support the priorities of the LLDCs in particular transport, energy and ICT infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, industrialization and regional integration. Greater mobilization of resources is needed from both domestic and international, public and private, to meet the development needs of LLDCs.

Fourth - Enhanced genuine, effective and durable multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to accelerating implementation of the VPoA in order to turn the LLDCs into
vibrant, prosperous and sustainable land-linked countries. This needs to include governments, the UN system, multilateral development institutions, regional and sub-regional organizations, the private sector, think tanks, and civil society at all levels – national, sub-regional, regional and international.

Fifth - Greater coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme and the 2030 Agenda and other global development frameworks including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement on climate change is crucial.

Sixth and last, but not least - the implementation, monitoring and follow up, at all levels, of the provisions of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Political Declaration of the mid-term review are essential. That is the reason we gathered here – now, we must take it forward.

Let the political declaration and its call for action guide us on the targeted and accelerated measures to fully achieve the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to appreciate the leadership role provided by Paraguay as the current Chair of the LLDCs. I want to express my deep appreciation for your commitment and strong support. And I look forward to working with the incoming Chair Kazakhstan in implementing the outcome of this meeting.

I thank the Governments of Austria, the People's Republic of China, India and the Russian Federation for their contributions towards supporting the preparatory process of the Midterm Review and the participation of delegates from capitals.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all staff, including my colleagues in OHRLLS as well as colleagues from other UN departments and entities for working together to make this meeting a success.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, allow me to reiterate that LLDCs represent about 509 million people. We must pool our efforts and enhance our partnerships for LLDCs to ensure that they are not left behind.
I wish to assure all of you that my Office places great importance in our continued support to the sustainable development of Landlocked Developing Countries. We will continue, together with Partners, to mobilize support to this end.

Thank you.