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To the Ambassadorial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries

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for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States**

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Conference Room 6

Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Happy New Year to you all.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be with you on this important occasion of the handover ceremony of Chairmanship of the LLDC Group.

At the outset, allow me to thank Paraguay and His Excellency Mr. Julio Cesar Arriola for leading the Group in the past 2 years and for his tireless efforts to advocate for the special needs of the LLDCs in the global processes. I also wish to recognize and appreciate the excellent cooperation that you maintained between your delegation, the LLDC Group and OHRLLS.

At the same time, I wish to again congratulate the incoming Chair, His Excellency Mr Kairat Umarov of Kazakhstan, and look forward to the continuing collaboration with his Bureau to support the LLDC group over the next 2 years.

2019 was indeed a landmark year for the LLDC Group. It was dominated by the preparations for the High-level Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action. We worked together with Member States, the rest of the UN system, and our partner institutions, to organize the regional review meetings that were held for the Euro and Asia; Africa and Latin America regions and a series of pre-conference events and undertake comprehensive analyses of the progress, constraints, and challenges on the implementation of the VPoA. Many LLDCs also prepared their national reports.

All these activities culminated in the comprehensive High-level Midterm review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs that was held— as a plenary meeting of the General Assembly—from 5 and 6 December 2019. The Meeting reviewed the progress made and adopted a Political Declaration that has a call for action for accelerating the implementation of the Programme in the remaining five years. I thank you all for your active engagement in both the preparatory process and the Mid Term review itself. I wish to also join the Chair in once again commending our two co-facilitators, Ambassador of Bhutan and Austria for guiding the work to a successful conclusion.

There were also important key meetings that the LLDCs actively participated in and contributed to in 2019 as highlighted by Ambassador Arriola. Some of the 2019 key

outcomes that are of importance to the development of LLDCs include the inter-governmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up; the Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly; the Ministerial Declaration of the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of LLDCs; and the Second Committee Resolution on LLDCs adopted last December.

There were also some sessions in 2019 of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction – BBNJ. I would like to point out that the BBNJ negotiations are continuing and it is important for LLDCs to continue their engagement in this process. On climate change, both the Climate Action Summit that was held here in New York in September and COP25 held in Madrid, Spain called for urgent and ambitious global climate action.

Turning back to the High-level Midterm review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme and its Political Declaration, I would like to reiterate the six key messages.

First, achievements were made on the VPoA priorities in the last five years and it is important to scale them up and or replicate them.

Second, the constraints and implementation gaps need to be urgently addressed – such as tackling extreme poverty, improving 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 reliable, building capacity for reliable data as well as addressing climate change and desertification.

Third – While the visibility of the LLDCs Group has increased, the level of support is not yet adequate. Substantial financing and capacity development are required to support the priorities of the LLDCs and greater mobilization of resources is needed.

Fourth - Enhanced genuine, effective and durable multi-stakeholder partnerships are needed to accelerate implementation of the VPoA.

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 - 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.

I also wish to note that the General Assembly adopted a resolution last December that asks the Secretary General to reinforce UN resources for the LLDC sub-programme and I look forward to working with you on this during the year in order to make this happen.

Turning to 2020, we need to actively implement the outcome of the Midterm Review and the Vienna Programme of Action. I look forward to working with the incoming Chair, Ambassador Kairat Umarov of Kazakhstan in advancing the implementation.

A number of meetings and global processes will take place this year that are of great importance to the LLDCs. These important gatherings include the Ministerial Transport Conference for LLDCs to be hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan on the 26th & 27th March, in preparation for the Second UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference to be held in China 5th – 7th May; 12th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference to be hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Nur Sultan from the 8th to 11th June; the LLDC Ministerial Meeting on trade also to be hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan during the margins of the WTO Ministerial Meeting; the 15th UNCTAD Quadrennial Conference to be held in Barbados on the 18th-23rd October, and the World Investment Forum in United Arab Emirates. It is very important that the group of LLDCs fully engage & actively participate and contribute to these meetings and processes.

There are of course also the continuing ongoing follow-up processes to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, such as the HLPF, the Financing for Development Forum. We need to make sure that LLDCs' concerns and needs are expressed in these fora, as they are essential to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. There is also the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations this year and I hope the Group will capitalize the occasion to highlight their priorities.

My Office is also organizing a training session of policy-makers from Ministries of Transport of LLDCs on how to promote transport connectivity and development of resilient transport infrastructure and preparation of bankable infrastructure projects. The training will be organized in collaboration with relevant partners and the

Ministry of Transport of China. OHRLLS will also organize interagency meeting to mobilize UN support to implement the VPoA and the outcome of the Midterm Review.

Let me conclude my remarks by stressing my hope that this year we could make the greatest stride in accelerating the implementation of the VPoA in order to set a high standard for the remaining years. I wish to assure you of my office's commitment to support your special development needs.

Once again I wish to thank Ambassador Arriola the outgoing Chair for your tremendous support and welcome the incoming Chair Ambassador Umarov.

I thank you for your attention.