

**Statement by Kazakhstan, LLDCs Chair
at the First 2020 Meeting of the
Group of Landlocked Developing Countries
at the Ambassadorial level**

22 January 2020, CR8, 15.00-17.00

Deputy Secretary-General,
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset let me welcome you all to this first 2020 Meeting of the Group of LLDCs at the Ambassadorial level under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan. I would like to once again express Kazakhstan's gratitude to the LLDCs Member States for their unilateral support to our candidature to the Bureau and the position of its Chair. We will try to fulfill the trust you have placed in my country, and look forward to your guidance as we move ahead.

Let me also recognize the presence and welcome Her Excellency United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Dr. Amina J. Mohammed. I thank her for honouring our invitation to attend this meeting and address the Group with her vision and pragmatic strategy for the future. She will serve as our guidepost throughout the year.

The objective of our meeting today is for me to share with you the Roadmap of the Group of LLDCs for the period 2020-2021, as well as the Chair's tentative working schedule for 2020. I also look forward to your inputs and comments on these documents so that we collectively share the leadership.

Dear Colleagues,

The 32 Landlocked Developing Countries, with a combined population of around 509 million, face special challenges related to our geographical remoteness, lack of direct access to the sea and isolation from the world trade and economic opportunities. We also have inadequate infrastructure, cumbersome border crossing procedures, as well as structural deficiencies. These are further compounded by limited capacities to deal with external shocks, aggravated by climate change. All of us are perfectly aware of these disadvantages that lie ahead

of us. It is obvious that because of them, the LLDCs continue to be vulnerable with limited capacities and dependence on very restricted commodities for exports.

As we have recently completed the Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action last December, assessments from national reports and three regional MTR meetings and consultations, clearly indicate that progress in the last five years was not sufficient to meet the objectives of VPoA or to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

In this respect, as it was pointed out by several Member States during the Chairmanship hand-over ceremony, we need to enhance our common efforts while achieving the goals and targets of the VPoA and the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review. Now, in the second phase of implementing the Vienna Programme and at the start of the Decade of Action for the SDGs, it sets significant tasks for our Bureau and the Group Member States to build on the outcome of the Midterm Review and give a certain impetus to the progress to be achieved.

This year, which is which is significant for the UN family's 75th Anniversary, should become a turning point for an enhanced global dialogue. These deliberations should result in concrete actions and outcomes to reach Agenda 2030.

The evidence is clear: development is not sustainable if it is not fair and inclusive because rising inequality hinders our long-term growth. Therefore our Group needs to take advantage of all the relevant processes not to be left behind.

During the LLDCs Chairmanship hand-over ceremony, we received several requests. To list some, they are to intensify efforts to engage all interested parties (UN agencies, international financial institutions, transit and developed donor countries) in a more active dialogue towards our common goals of substantive implementing the Vienna Programme and the Political Declaration. There were also requests for convening an annual multilateral meeting with the participation of all these stakeholders, more active involvement in the work of LLDCs of the International Think Tank for LLDCs, together with increasing the visibility of the Group in international fora. These are only few of the many other suggestions offered to us, but I spell out here only the most salient of them, to which we will give attention in due time.

As a follow-up to this, today during the briefing by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on his 2020 priorities, I have already noted on behalf of our Group, that currently LLDCs are heavily lagging behind in their targets for reaching the 17 SDGs and the VPoA. I have brought the attention of the UN Secretariat to the fact

that, while UN projects are developed on individual country-specific basis, the numerous challenges are transboundary in nature, and that calls for greater consultations, coordination and streamlining within the UN system. Such a strategy will result in more efficient coherence with a view to avoid wasteful overlaps and duplication.

Thus, we emphasize that for the LLDCs, we see it relevant that the UN agencies and the Member States build a new approach of greater regional cooperation to overcome contemporary challenges. This has to be accompanied by a robust collaboration among the LLDCs, as well as between them and transit developing countries. This obviously has to be also enhanced by the invaluable support from other development partners through their ODA channels.

Additionally, strengthened coordination among the UN agencies and their integrated support are highly needed by LLDCs implement the VPoA and Political Declaration to achieve inclusive sustainable development. In this respect, we rely also on support of the UN Secretariat and the Member States to promote this agenda for the sake of our common interests.

In this context, as part of our two-year Chairmanship, Kazakhstan intends to actively contribute to implement the VPoA, the Political Declaration and Agenda 2030 through enhanced and coordinated cooperation of the Group countries with transit countries, donor countries, UN agencies, representatives of the private sector and academia. At the same time, we need international financial institutions and other interested stakeholders.

In this regard, Kazakhstan envisages strengthening the efforts of the LLDCs Group via more active and concrete regional cooperation, through all possible mechanisms and structures. We see it also appropriate to establish a more efficient dialogue and coordination between the UN agencies themselves to overcome modern challenges affecting LLDCs.

In addition, we see strengthening the implementation by LLDCs of the international legal framework as one of the vital factors for our success. At present, LLDCs are using not the highest possible extent the benefits of the international legal framework (including those on LLDC issues) to which they have already joined. Achieving the objectives of these agreements will contribute to the sustainable development of countries and regions of LLDCs, which will increase the status of the Group.

We also see it important to establish close coordination of the LLDCs with other groups of vulnerable countries (LDCs and SIDS) to further consolidate the unity and solidarity of the three groups as a strong negotiating force in relevant fora, to settle the diverse and unique challenges faced by individual countries of the three groups.

Last but not least, I wish to acknowledge with warmest appreciation the work of H.E. Madam Utoikamanu, High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and her staff for their commitment to our common cause. Taking this opportunity, I would like to appeal to the highest leadership of UN's management to consider strengthening the OHRLLS Subprogramme for LLDCs within the necessary resources as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution on budgetary matters adopted in December last year.

Having outlined the main vision of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship, we are interested in your observations on the Roadmap as well as the Working schedule.

As you may see our Chairmanship and the Bureau have already started some activities. In particular:

January

On **6 January**, the Chair with the Bureau Member States had a meeting with USG on Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Liu Zhenmin to discuss the opportunities of a coherent cooperation between LLDCs and DESA.

On **13 January** I delivered on behalf of our Group a statement at the Briefing by the President of the General Assembly on his main priorities for the resumed part of the 74th GA session in 2020.

On **14 January** the Chair and the Bureau met with the UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner to discuss the enhanced cooperation with the Programme.

On **15-16 January** I have also met together with the OHRLLS Secretariat representatives with the Global Directors of the World Bank on Trade and on Transport, while considering the opportunity for the World Bank to participate in the Ministerial Conference on Trade in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan as well as in the Ministerial Conference on Transport in Awaza, Turkmenistan this year.

On **17 January** we also met with the Head of EU delegation, Ambassador Olof Skoog to discuss possible ways for streamlining the future cooperation with our Group.

Today, as I have already mentioned, I delivered a statement on behalf of our Group highlighting the need to equally address the specific challenges of the LLDCs during the briefing by the Secretary-General on his 2020 priorities.

February

As the next follow-up activities, I plan to visit Geneva to take part in the 69th session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board on 5-7 February. During that stay we are also planning to meet with several UN agencies (UNCTAD, International Trade Centre, WTO and others) with respect to such key areas for our countries as trade diversification and facilitation, transport infrastructure, ICT access and others.

On **11 February**, we would like to propose to organize an interactive dialogue of the Group with Professor Jeffrey Sachs from Columbia University, a renowned specialist on development and LLDCs issues. In addition, besides these, we are interested in your views and proposals for the agenda and inputs for this meeting, together with list of additional key speakers (to propose DESA and UNDP).

Outlining the major high-level meetings for LLDCs for this year, I should mention the following events:

1. Ministerial meeting of LLDCs on Transport to be held on 26-27 March in Awaza, Turkmenistan;
2. Second Global UN Conference on Sustainable Transport to be held on 6-7 May in Beijing, China;
3. Ministerial meeting of LLDCs on Trade to be held on 7 June and followed by the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference to be held on 8-11 June in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan;
4. Annual Ministerial LLDCs Meeting in September in New York and many others.

At the end of the year we plan to highlight the main outcomes and progress achieved during 2020.

Dear Colleagues,

To conclude, our Chairmanship envisages a tentative but very busy calendar for the first three months in advance, and would like to continue with the same robustness and vigour throughout the year.

I would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's consistent and committed partnership to the UN family, and especially the LLDCs developing partners. In its capacity as the new Chair, Kazakhstan will spare no effort to revitalize the cooperation between our Group and all the interested stakeholders, including respective UN agencies, international financial institutions, private sector and academia.

We will work hard to enable our Group to do its very best for our common future. In this vein, I would also like to emphasize the importance of all Member States to participate in these comprehensive processes. We shall rely in turn on our Group so we together can live up to the expectations of the people we serve. We will achieve the desired outcomes we have set before ourselves for we have no other option but to succeed.
