

**Statement by Chair of the  
Group of Landlocked Developing Countries  
at the meeting of the Group with the UN Secretary-General  
at the Ambassadorial level**

*5 March 2020, CR7, 15.00-16.30*

Dear Secretary-General,  
Under-Secretary-General Madam Utoikamanu,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

We are highly honoured to have the presence of our very esteemed Secretary-General António Guterres. I thank him for addressing this Group with his vision and pragmatic strategy for the future. We can be truly reassured that he will serve as our guide and mentor throughout this term.

The objective of our meeting today is to share our main priorities of LLDCs in this Decade of Action with the Secretary-General.

The 32 Landlocked Developing Countries, with a combined population of around 509 million, **still 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. 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.

This is further aggravated by **climate change threats** such as land degradation, water resources scarcity, glaciers melting. Meanwhile we still need to raise the international awareness, including in the UN system for all these issues.

As we have recently completed the Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action last December, assessments 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.

We find that while UN projects are developed on individual country-specific basis, the numerous challenges are transboundary in nature. The modern world of intense

globalization and deep mutual integration requires finding new approaches in settling the international issues, including on the **regional and interregional basis**. This could be promoted by **meaningful collaboration among the LLDCs, and between LLDCs and transit developing countries**.

Hence, this 75th anniversary year, which is significant for the UN family, should become a turning point for an enhanced global dialogue. This without any question should result in concrete actions and outcomes to reach Agenda 2030. In this respect, **we support you, Secretary-General, in your tireless efforts in promoting the multilateral approach in promoting the UN Reform**. In the end, its main goal is to provide necessary assistance to developing countries to make them more sustainable.

Based on the previous discussions in New York as well as the outcomes of my meetings in Geneva, different UN agencies are ready to prepare a **Roadmap or visionary document** on what practical steps we could take to implement the Vienna Programme of Action and the Decade of Action.

In this light, on behalf of the Group I would like to request the Secretary-General to consider this possibility of the UN-OHRLS together with UNCTAD, World Bank, International Trade Centre, DESA and other important stakeholders preparing such a document. These practical deliverables could lay out the path for us to overcome the long existing challenges.

I also 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, and appeal **to endow this office with all possible resources** to more effectively implement its mandate of **supporting the LLDCs**.

I thank you.