Excellencies,
Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to join you. I thank the Chair, His Excellency Ambassador Kairat Umarov, for his efforts.

At the outset, I would like to express my admiration for the tireless work that landlocked developing countries have been doing to address the challenges associated with the geographic and other constraints they face.

In line with the Paris Agreement, your Group is focusing intently on addressing the climate crisis, desertification, droughts, land degradation and natural disasters.

And through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, landlocked developing countries are taking steps to boost trade, forge transit links, advance digital connectivity and diversify their economies.

Regional cooperation and integration will be paramount in building corridors of trade and prosperity.

The development aspirations of landlocked countries have long had to contend with hard facts of circumstance such as remoteness, size and other factors.

Today, additional threats are endangering progress and exacerbating those challenges, including protracted conflicts, rising tensions over trade and technology and, now, the effects of the COVID-19 virus.

One third of the 509 million people in landlocked developing countries are still living in extreme poverty. People already feeling untouched by the broad thrust of global progress, today fear being left behind entirely by globalization.

As we embark on a Decade of Action to deliver the global goals, and strive to accelerate implementation of the Almaty and Vienna Programmes of Action, greater support for landlocked developing countries is essential.

We need strong partnerships -- and an active sharing of lessons and successful experiences -- among landlocked developing countries, transit countries, development actors and other stakeholders.
I commend the landlocked developing countries that have presented their voluntary national reviews at the High-Level Political Forum – and the 13 that will do so this year, 5 of them for the second time.

South-south cooperation is a further invaluable source of lessons and support.

Let us remember that 17 of the 32 landlocked developing countries also share the challenges of being least developed countries.

On average, your countries pay more than double in transport costs compared to their transit neighbours; and most of your exports remain highly concentrated in a few primary commodities, with limited capacity to produce high-value products.

Access to finance remains a significant challenge, and much of the official development assistance continues to target just a few of your members.

Moreover, foreign direct investment flows to landlocked developing countries have been declining, and illicit financial flows continue to have an adverse impact on public finances.

I reaffirm in the strongest possible terms my appeal for all the financial commitments assumed in the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and in the Paris Agreement to be fully met.

The reformed UN development system, now with empowered Resident Coordinators and a new generation of Country Teams, is better positioned to provide tailored support, integrated policy advice and technical capacities to landlocked developing countries to address your priorities.

We will take steps to strengthen the capacities of the High Representative for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, in line with General Assembly resolution 74/262 adopted last December.

Excellencies,

Let me stress once again that we are committed to help turn landlocked developing countries into land-linked engines of dynamism. Prosperity in your countries will help to ensure a better future for all. Finding and scaling-up solutions must be a collective priority, from defeating climate change to eradicating poverty and across our shared agenda.

You can always count on my support and that of the United Nations system.

I wish the members of the Group every success in our important work ahead.

Thank you.