

## **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

### **Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries**

**New York, 22 September 2022**

**We**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries, have met at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2022, at the margins of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly to provide strategic guidance for the accelerated and full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, and have held our deliberations under the theme "*Accelerating*"

**Reaffirming** our commitment to implement the Vienna Programme of Action in synergy with the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks as a process through the Decade of Action and delivery for sustainable development,

**Emphasizing** that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development,

**Recognizing** that the pandemic has had significant socio-economic effects it has posed for landlocked developing countries, recognizing that the pandemic has hit hardest owing to their geographical vulnerability, their health systems, limited social protection coverage, financial and other constraints, including limited fiscal and policy space, debt distress as a consequence of the pandemic, and vulnerability to external shocks,

**Recalling** General Assembly resolution 76/217 of 17 December 2021 on the Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in which the Assembly took the decision in accordance with paragraph 66 of the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 to mandate to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and to formulate and adopt a renewed work for international support to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and to strengthen partnerships between the landlocked developing countries and transit countries and their development partners,

**Recalling also** General Assembly resolution 75/222 of 30 December 2020 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the opportunities for development of the United Nations system that calls upon the United Nations development system to support the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, in line with the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA,

**Recognizing** that sustainable, inclusive, people-centered and resilient

***Reaffirming*** that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to the achievement of the Vienna Programme of Action and to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and other initiatives, and **call upon** the public and private sectors to fill the funding gap of these initiatives;

6. **We welcome also** the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement and support ongoing discussion at the World Trade Organization on how the multilateral rules-based trade system can contribute to enhancing access to equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. **We call** on WTO Members to expeditiously conclude the discussions to further contribute to global efforts to enhance access to affordable essential medicines, vaccines, personal protective equipment and medical equipment to effectively address COVID-19;
7. **We stress** that as we head into the final stretches of the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action, efforts towards both need to be reoriented to incorporate the long-term impact of COVID-19, building of more equal, inclusive and sustainable institutions and the nurturing of resilient economies. Towards this end, a transformative recovery aimed at reducing vulnerability to future crises and ensuring that LLDCs can make the necessary progress towards achieving the SDGs and respond to the ambition and the urgency of the Vienna Programme of Action is paramount. **We renew** our commitment to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA;
8. **We reiterate** the importance of fostering strong synergy and coherence at all levels in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the Vienna Programme of Action with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other development processes including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;
9. **We recognize** the central role of the United Nations system in supporting the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as catalyzing and coordinating the global recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, based on unity, solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation. **We encourage** Member States, the United Nations system organizations, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to implement their collective commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations in supporting the LLDCs;
10. **We recognize** that, although GDP grew 4.6 per cent in LLDCs in 2021, the vulnerability of LLDCs and the adverse global economic conditions constrain their ability to fully recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. **We call** on the relevant UN organizations, development partners to support LLDCs efforts to diversify their economies and enhance resilience towards future disasters and shocks including through achieving structural economic diversification;
11. **We express concern** that the proportion of people covered by at least one social protection benefit is significantly lower in LLDCs at 19.6 per cent compared to the global average of 46.9 per cent. We commit to supporting the scaling up of effective social protection systems along with government spending on key services in order to safeguard the poor and vulnerable during the current and future crises. **We call** on development partners, the United Nations, and other international organizations to support LLDCs to expand social protection programmes and strengthen social safety nets to help prevent vulnerable groups from falling deeper into poverty and **we call** on

international financial institutions, multilateral organizations and regional banks to provide quick balance-of-payment and budget support with limited conditionalities to LLDCs so as to enable them to respond adequately to this pandemic;

12.

19. **We look forward to** the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the

rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, are constraining LLDCs to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. **Furthermore, we regret that** while the pandemic-related border restrictions and lockdowns constrained the transport of food, **and that** the increased world market prices resulting from the conflict in Ukraine also affect LLDCs that depend on imported foodstuffs and fertilizers;

25. **We reaffirm** our commitment to develop quality, accessible, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure as an integral element of the COVID-19 recovery efforts, including regional and transboundary infrastructure, to enhance our connectivity to regional and global markets and support a sustainable and inclusive recovery and resilience of our economies;

26. **We welcome** the outcome of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference held in hybrid format in Beijing, China, from 14 to 16 October 2021 and its key recommendations for action by the United Nations system, governments, businesses, scientists, civil society, and others which include the need to invest in transport corridors to improve hinterland connectivity, build integrated transport systems with high inter-connectivity and cost-effectiveness that were geared towards establishing more comprehensive transportation corridors using low carbon, green technologies and recognized that financial and technical cooperation and support by developed countries remain crucial for developing countries to build better connectivity, especially first and last mile connectivity; to maintain existing infrastructure; and to invest in capacity-building for inclusive, green, and accessible transport ~~systems~~ in developing countries;

27. **We also welcome** the Awaza Summary Statement of the Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries that was held in Awaza, Turkmenistan on 15 and 16 August 2022, which calls for actions to enhance transport connectivity of LLDCs and accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and **call for** ~~renewed attention of the States~~ ~~as it is~~ ~~the~~ ~~only~~ ~~way~~ ~~to~~ ~~achieve~~ ~~the~~ ~~goals~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~2030~~ ~~Agenda~~ ~~for~~ ~~Human~~ ~~Development~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~Paris~~ ~~Agreement~~ ~~on~~ ~~Climate~~ ~~Change~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~United~~ ~~Nations~~ ~~Convention~~ ~~to~~ ~~Combat~~ ~~Desertification~~ ~~and~~ ~~Land~~ ~~Degradation~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~Prevent~~ ~~Land~~ ~~Degradation~~ ~~and~~ ~~Desertification~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~dry~~ ~~lands~~ ~~and~~ ~~sub~~ ~~arid~~ ~~and~~ ~~semi~~ ~~arid~~ ~~regions~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~strengthen~~ ~~the~~ ~~resilience~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~dry~~ 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## 30. We underscore





41. **We stress** that a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and

provide technical assistance to promote e-commerce in LLDCs including through capacity building and advice on improving digital infrastructure;

47. **We stress** that building productive capacities is a core requirement for achieving sustainable industrial development and structural transformation and export diversification and encourage LLDCs to mainstream the building of productive capacities in their national development strategies. **We further stress** that national efforts of LLDCs need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment and financial, technical and capacity-building assistance towards building their productive capacities, enhancing diversification and value-addition, implementing industrial policies, and fostering structural economic transformation;

48. **We note** that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to mitigate its impact have had particularly negative consequences on service sectors such as tourism, retail, and hospitality, some labor-intensive sectors, small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector resulting in higher unemployment, particularly amongst vulnerable segments of society. **We therefore call on** development partners and international organizations to provide assistance to LLDCs to establish initiatives to support SMEs such as through provision of enhanced finance and access to credit, capacity building and employing ICTs and innovation in business operations that may help in building the resilience of LLDCs' economies in the post-COVID-19 era;

49. **We emphasize** that **building** a conducive business environment for privBT42842 re866 0 595 84

enabling environments and call for enhanced support to build the revenue collection capacity of LLDCs;

53. **We welcome** the growth in official development assistance in 2020 and reaffirm that official development assistance is crucial for LLDCs in accelerating implementation of the VPoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and call upon development partners and the international community to mobilize additional development finance from all sources to support LLDCs' recovery efforts from the COVID-19 crisis and build long-term resilience;

54. **We are deeply con**





mankind, the exploration and exploitation of which shall be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole, irrespective of the geographical location of States. **We call on** the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority to support the LLDCs in awareness raising, capacity-building, technology transfer, and the sharing of experiences to facilitate the participation of LLDCs in the ocean economy and in ocean related norm setting discussions including in the ongoing discussions on 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). **We urge** LLDCs to fully engage on Ocean issues including the negotiations on BBNJ to safeguard their interests in the Ocean economy. **We urge** LLDCs that have not yet done so to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);

74. **We recognize** the critical importance of the work of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in improving research and capacity development for the LLDCs and in promoting networking and collaboration among researchers and research institutions for the benefit of the LLDCs. We call upon relevant international and regional organizations including UN-OHRLS, UN-ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO and others relevant stakeholders, including research institutions, think tanks, to strengthen collaboration on research and capacity building with the International Think Tank for LLDCs on all the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action and foster coherence in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action with the Sustainable Development Goals;
75. **We take note with appreciation** of the contributions made by the host country Mongolia and other LLDCs who are party to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs and **call on** development partners, Member States that are party to the Agreement, United Nations system, other international organizations and other stakeholders to provide voluntary contributions to the International Think Tank. **We urge** all LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs to do so;
76. **We call upon** Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative to support the implementation of the VPoA and to support the preparatory processes towards the Third UN Conference on LLDCs;
77. **We stress** that, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to, effective monitoring of, and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the Political Declaration of its midterm review and the Roadmap for the accelerated implementation of the VPoA. It should also continue to undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels raising awareness on the special needs of LLDCs, build multi-stakeholder partnerships, and mobilize international support and resources in favour of the LLDCs;
78. **We welcome** the appointment of Ms. Rabab Fatima as the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States and **we request** the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed



number of participants at the highest political level, including Heads of State and Government in the Conference to be held in 2024;

86. **We request** the Presidents of the 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the UN General Assembly to make substantive contributions to the preparatory process of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs, including by organizing a dedicated high-level event of the General Assembly focusing on the key priorities of LLDCs in preparation of the outcome of the Conferenc