

Asuncion Call for Action

Introduction

1. We, the Ministers and representatives of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), together with stakeholders, including representatives of transit countries, development partners, United Nations agencies, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and the private sector, gathered in Asuncion, Paraguay, on July 27 and 28 2023 for the High-Level Regional Review Meeting of Latin America, in preparation for the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs to be held in 2024, on 27-28 July 2023, to conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPA) in the Latin American Region. This includes the identification of achievements, gaps, constraints, emerging challenges and opportunities, the sharing of best practices, experiences and innovative approaches to accelerate post-pandemic recovery and achieve sustainable development in LLDCs, as well as the identification of appropriate policy measures and concrete action-oriented recommendations at national, regional and global levels needed to make the successor program of action for LLDCs truly transformative, especially to contribute to the acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin American LLDCs.
2. We recall the comprehensive High-level Midterm Review on the implementation of the VPoA in New York on 5-6 December 2019 and its High Level Political Declaration. We also recall the holding of the regional review meeting for the Latin American Region in Santiago, Chile on June 11-12, 2019.
3. We reaffirm the global commitments to address the special development needs and challenges of LLDCs made at major UN conferences and summits, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
4. We stress the importance of unhindered, efficient and cost-effective access of LLDCs to and from the sea by all modes of transport, on the basis of freedom of transit and other related measures, in accordance with applicable rules of international law, including regional conventions.
5. We welcome with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Rwanda to host the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs in Kigali.

Evaluation of progress

6. We recognize the progress made by the region's LLDCs in implementing the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, however, we remain concerned that the progress made is not sufficient for the LLDCs to achieve sustainable development.
7. We note with great concern the fragile and highly uncertain global socioeconomic outlook, the continuing negative effects of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and the effects of climate change, all of which increase pressure on global inflation, energy and food prices, finance, supply chain disruptions, and high transportation and trade costs. These dynamics further constrain the ability of LLDCs to achieve

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In 2022, all LLDCs accounted for 1.12% of world merchandise trade, while the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay accounted for 0.06% and 0.04% respectively.

17. We recognize that, during the review period, Latin American LLDCs have worked diligently to diversify their export baskets and diversify their markets by targeting non-traditional markets. However, the structural transformation of the economy, innovation and the growth of modern business services remain major challenges in the face of rapid global expansion, and the merchandise exports of Latin American LLDCs remain predominantly composed of primary products, making them highly vulnerable to the changing international environment, external shocks and climate change.

18. We further recognize the progress made by the region's LLDCs in creating an enabling environment for the continued growth of e-commerce and the opportunities created by the digital economy. We underscore the need to help LLDCs adapt quickly to the rapid transitions of the digital economy as a way to alleviate the challenges associated with their landlocked status and further integrate them into global trade by leveraging digital technologies.

19. We note with concern that the adverse effects of climate change, with its increasing frequency and intensity of disasters and their devastating impacts on LLDCs, are undermining the implementation of the VPA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of its Sustainable Development Goals. Latin America's LLDCs were increasingly affected by climate-induced disasters such as heat waves, floods and droughts. These events weaken infrastructure (including railroads, roads, hydroelectric plants, housing, schools and public buildings), impact communication routes, such as international waterways, which are essential for trade, energy and transportation, and impose a direct cost on transit trade, which consequently limits the ability of Latin American LLDCs to compete in global markets.

20. We recognize that both LLDCs in the region are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to their geographic location, the territorial distribution of their populations and their natural resource-dependent production systems. Alterations in weather patterns also affect the region's infrastructure and transportation system, including the Paraguay-Parana Waterway, causing increasing damage, disruption of trade and consequent economic losses. We also recognize that mitigation measures must take into account the special needs of LLDCs so as not to impose a disproportionate burden on their development.

21. We note with concern that, in 2020, the LLDCs together received 21.99% of total ODA flows to developing countries and that the two Latin micted by

Call for action:

24. We urge LLDCs and transit countries in the region to continue to actively participate in the

including tourism. We also stressed the importance of the role of the private sector in the provision

organizations to increase their support to LLDCs and transit countries to implement these agreements.

48. We agree on the need to consolidate positions in climate change discussions and formalize the LLDC Group under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, in order to enhance our coordination, project a strong voice and work with relevant stakeholders to advance the interests of LLDCs on climate-related issues, especially with respect to climate change vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation, and call on the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28) to be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2023 to consider the impact of climate change on LLDCs in the deliberations and outcomes.

49. We note with great concern that Latin American LLDCs are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and continue to be heavily affected by floods, storms, droughts, forest

system, including ECLAC, to promote strategies that take into account the special challenges and needs of LLDCs, including but not limited to the Regional Collaboration Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCP LAC), and to support LLDCs by deploying regional knowledge and expertise to assist UN Resident Coordinators and country teams.

63. We call upon UN Resident Coordinators and their country teams to enhance effective and tailored support to Latin American LLDCs, building on their neutrality and new capacities to channel the diverse expertise of the entire UN system. We urge UN entities to strengthen synergies in support of the needs and priorities of LLDCs. In addition, we encourage Resident Coordinators to effectively convene partners and stakeholders, expand access to SDG funding, and ensure the integration of the priorities of the next PoA into the Cooperation Frameworks.

64. We strongly urge the Secretary-General and Member States to strengthen UN-OHRLLS, ECLAC and UNCTAD to enable them to provide substantive support to LLDCs in their efforts to meaningfully engage in intergovernmental discussions and implement the action agenda for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda.

65. We stand ready to partner with all relevant stakeholders to work towards addressing the special development needs and challenges faced by LLDCs. The preparatory process for the Third UN Conference on LLDCs, other important events to be held in the run-up to the LLDC3 Conference, such as the SDG Summit, the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development, COP28 and the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, provide opportunities for us to work towards a transformative successor agenda for action to the VPoA, as it is in our mutual interest. We believe that the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference will be a special opportunity to propose the recognition of LLDCs as a specific category of countries within the WTO system.

66. We note the importance of integrating the priorities of the forthcoming action program for LLDCs into national and sectoral development strategies. We call on UN-OHRLLS, ECLAC and UNCTAD to provide the necessary support, including, inter alia, capacity building through a specific training program.

67. We stress the need for a strong follow-up and review mechanism for the implementation of

partnership with other relevant UN entities, to enhance the technical capacities of National Focal Points on LLDCs.

70. We emphasize the fundamental importance of the private sector as a key partner in achieving significant transformations, with a view to the next action agenda for LLDCs. The private sector plays a critical role as an engine of economic growth and a facilitator of international trade.

71. We recognize the difficulties that LLDC status represents for the private sector in achieving full participation in international trade and in terms of comparative advantage.

72. We urge countries to ensure that they collaborate with the private sector to identify barriers, propose solutions, finance infrastructure, address existing policy gaps and provide a competitive domestic environment for international trade actors seeking to formulate innovative strategies and policy recommendations, driving development, innovation and ensuring access to productive employment that generates fair incomes, workplace security and social protection for all.

73. We urge all UN Member States and members of specialized agencies, in particular LLDCs, transit countries and donor countries, as well as the UN system and international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in the Conference at the highest possible level.

74. We commit to implement the calls for action contained in this outcome document at the national, regional and global levels and to accelerate progress on agreed policies, programs and investments, while recognizing that some of the calls for action will require capacity building and technical and financial assistance to be effectively implemented by LLDCs and transit countries.

75. We present this outcome to the session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee as an input to the outcome document of the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs.

Vote of thanks

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