
Statement by

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for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and
Secretary General of the Third UN Conference of
Landlocked Developing Countries

9th

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

A warm welcome to you all.

And I thank

In the last decade, the annual per capita GDP growth rate of LLDCs averaged just about 1.2 percent, less than half that of the average of all developing countries.

Their pre-existing challenges emanating from their land-lockedness and more complex supply chains, put them on the frontline of geopolitical tensions, and the lingering consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trade is a powerful tool for development, but LLDCs are yet to reap its full benefits.

Despite accounting for 7 percent of the world's population, LLDCs account for just 1.1 percent of world trade, and only 0.75 percent of world trade in services.

83 percent of the merchandise exports of LLDCs are in primary commodities.

Their share of world trade in manufactures amounts to as little as 0.28 percent.

Excellencies,

The new Programme of Action for the LLDCs, which was agreed by consensus in New York earlier this month, attaches special attention to the critically important issues of trade and trade facilitation, with concrete targets, commitments, and deliverables.

The POA aims to at least double the share of LLDCs in global merchandise exports.

It also aims to diversify their exports by increasing their value-added and manufactured component, and by expanding exports of services and e-commerce.

Allow me to highlight some of the significant actions in the POA to facilitate trade and aid for trade.

First: the POA includes commitments to support the implementation of national trade strategies and policies to improve the business environment and to enable smaller firms

It also puts enhanced attention to capacity building to overcome the unique challenge of

Given the pressing need for a more supportive multilateral trading system for LLDCs, this work programme is expected to study the special needs, challenges, and vulnerabilities of LLDCs and propose related multilateral measures.

The POA also commits to supporting the six LLDCs that are in different stages of the process of acceding to the WTO.

Fifth: given that trade costs are 30 per cent higher for LLDCs than their coastal transit countries, the POA has put renewed focus on trade facilitation and infrastructure for both LLDCs and transit countries.

Full implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement will be key for these countries.

This can reduce trade costs for LLDCs by up to 14.3%. Simplifying and harmonizing customs procedures, improving infrastructure at border crossings, and enhancing transit cooperation with neighboring countries are going to be vital steps in this regard.

Improving transport infrastructure will be critical to address the estimated \$510 billion transport infrastructure gap in LLDCs.

Recognizing this gap, the POA has identified a dedicated Investment Finance Facility as a concrete deliverable to address the LLDCs' infrastructure financing needs.

Sixth: supporting LLDCs will always entail regional collaboration and partnerships.

The POA requests the UN Secretary-General to constitute a high-level panel of experts on freedom of transit. This will examine the application of the existing international laws and agreements, identify constraints, and make recommendations on the freedom of transit for LLDCs.

There are also commitments to further strengthen regional integration with a focus on implementing agreed frameworks, the creation of regional value chains, and regional **cumulation**.

Finally: the POA calls on all relevant organizations, including UNCTAD, the World Bank, World Trade Organization, World Customs Organization, and the International Trade Centre, to provide specific support to landlocked and transit developing countries.

This includes: for export promotion, trade fairs, trade facilitation, e-commerce, and the design and implementation of inclusive trade policies with specific consideration to women, youth, and people in vulnerable situations.

Excellencies,

The targets and commitments in the POA are indeed ambitious

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by iterating that the LLDC3 Conference in Gaborone later this year, is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to demonstrate our shared commitment to make a real difference in the lives of the 570 million people of the 32 LLDCs. Let us not miss this opportunity.

I call upon you all to participate at this Conference at the highest political level.

I look forward to welcoming you all in Gaborone.

I thank you.