



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,

1. I am especially delighted to address you for the first time as the Global Chair of the LLDCs.

2. Coincidentally, I am also flanked on the podium by Senior Officials who recently assumed their respective positions in the UN system. At the outset, allow me therefore to congratulate;

◁ **His Excellency** , on his election as the President of the 77th Session of the General Assembly;

◁ **Her Excellency Ms Lachezara Stoeva** on her election as the 78th President of ECOSOC, succeeding Botswana's Permanent Representative with whom she recently served as Vice-President of the Council; and

◁ **Her Excellency Ms. Rabab Fatima**, on her appointment by the UN Secretary-General as the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for OHRLLS -- an Office that serves the interests of our Group of Countries.

alongside the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals as well as our ongoing plans to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. It is during our annual meetings that we assess our achievements, identify challenges, and also share experiences and best practices.
7. We are also here to make recommendations and discuss current and emerging global issues of importance to the LLDCs -- indeed, during a time characterized by complex geopolitical tensions.
8. As you would be aware, 2022 is also a crucial juncture for the LLDCs, as we approach the last two years of implementation of the VPoA and simultaneously embark on preparations for the **Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs** to be held in 2024.

9. These intertwined realities we face are what gathers us here today, and have also informed our theme for this meeting on

Action

11. We must be concerned that our group of countries continue to face obstacles in meeting the target to vaccinate 70% of our population by mid-2022 as outlined in the WHO Global COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy.
12. Whereas scientific progress and cooperation had allowed for timely manufacturing of the vaccines, it is disturbing to note that by end of April 2022 only 26% of our population as LLDCs was fully vaccinated.
13. We must therefore, as part of the outcomes of this meeting, reiterate our call for support to our countries to ensure that in addition to our immediate needs including of vaccines, LLDCs be better capacitated to build resilience to withstand future shocks.
14. Furthermore, as LLDCs we are constrained to recover from the impacts of the pandemic due to adverse global economic

20. As Chair of our group of countries, Botswana will therefore lead efforts to immediately embark on an intentional journey towards the timely preparations of the **Third UN Conference on LLDCs**, ahead of 2024.

21. In this context, I thank you, **President of the General Assembly**, for setting the tone and leading the process on organizational aspect of the Conference during this 77th Session.

22. We would be grateful to organize a dedicated high-level event with you, focusing on some key priorities of LLDCs as part of preparations for this important Conference.

23. Our group of countries also requests you, **President of ECOSOC**, to make similar contributions to the preparatory process.

24. We also count on the engagement of all stakeholders and partners in the preparatory process for the Conference; and as

Chair, Botswana pledges to fully engage to ensure its ultimate success.

25. As recently recommended by our Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives in New York, the preparations for the Conference would also benefit from the revival of the **Group of Friends of LLDCs**, with participation of transit countries and our partners.

26. **Mr. President of the General** Assembly, our group of countries

of the 2030 Agenda. In this spirit, we will continue constructive engagement on his report on **Our Common Agenda**.

29. Our group of countries expects that the same language of determination should also translate into tangible impact to fully implement the VPoA and formulation of its successor Programme.

30. The LLDCs support your own tireless efforts, **Madame Deputy Secretary-General**, to transform the UN Development System to better respond to the needs of our countries, especially through financing that is adequate, predictable and sufficient.

31. We are particularly happy to hear that recent assessments of the reforms indicate that the new generation of Resident Coordinators feel more empowered and that the country support frameworks are much more impactful.

32. As LLDs -- whose membership is also home to a highly vulnerable group of 17 LDCs -- we urge for continued focus on the development agenda

countries' interests -- with active input from ECOSOC and Second Committee.

36. I cannot emphasize enough that, in the lead-up to the **Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs** in 2024, the convening of targeted thematic sessions will become even more imperative.

37. In this regard, it would be remiss on my part to end without thanking the government of Turkmenistan for recently convening the **LLDCs Ministerial Conference on Transport**. The *Awaza*

Conference on LDCs to be held in Doha, in March 2023; and the **4th International Conference on SIDS** also to be held in 2024.

39. We recognize the importance of these meetings to the needs of our group of countries and, as LLDCs Chair, Botswana will actively play her leadership role.

40. I wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the strong support that the High Representative and her OHRLLS team provide to our group of countries. In our view, the simultaneous and back-to-back convening of the upcoming mandated conferences for LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS and the potential growth in the demands for OHRLLS services will challenge the current capacity of the Office.

41. **Madame Deputy Secretary-General**, our group of countries strongly encourage the Secretary-General to entrust the High Representative for OHRLLS to re-examine the needs of the

Office with a view to further strengthen it to effectively carry out its mandate.

aspirations for a forward-looking and dynamic 21st Annual Meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries.

I thank you for your kind attention.