

Check against delivery

**Statement by Ambassador Magzhan Ilyassov,
Chair of the Group of LLDCs at the briefing of UNCTAD
to LLDC Ambassadors based in Geneva and New York**

*7 December 2020, 10.00a.m.-12.00 p.m. New York
virtual meeting (Webex platform)*

Time: 7 minutes

**Ambassador Lundeg,
Distinguished panelists,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great honour to open this joint interactive dialogue of the LLDC Ambassadors from Geneva and New York with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries in my capacity as its Chair.

The briefing today is timely and relevant. 2020 year marks the beginning of the Decade of Action, instituted to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. However, this year will be also a historic due to COVID-19 pandemic spread-out, which brought immerse thorough to hundreds of thousands of people as well as negatively affected our economies, including sustainability of our trade and development.

Last December, the UN convened a comprehensive high-level Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs to assess the progress made to achieve the Programme as well as to implement the SDGs by LLDCs, for both of which the momentum is considerably lagging. Our Group, having more than 520 mln of population, has its own specific challenges.

There are many challenges still not addressed within LLDCs. They are to mention a few: extreme poverty, at a level higher than the world average; low integration in global trade; huge deficits in transport, ICT and energy infrastructure; negative impact of climate change; very insufficient foreign direct investment flows; limited productive and industrial capacity to create high value-added products.

As we will here today in more detail on productive capacities, I would like to underscore that the COVID-19 crisis has brought a further backward progress for our economies. The efforts to rebuild our economies in the post-pandemic era will fall significantly short unless the productive capacities of LLDCs are sufficiently improved. That could be possible only with the urgent assistance of development partners and international organizations.

Today, as we continue to struggle with these global challenges and promote the principle of leaving no one behind, we need also to pay special attention to all the vulnerable countries, including LLDCs as well as LDCs and SIDS. These three groups

with 91 countries comprise almost half of the UN. That is, without tackling the issues of almost half of the world, achieving Agenda 2030 seems to be highly unlikely.

Thus, for all developing countries in special situations, we see it relevant that the UN agencies and Member States **build a new approach based on the concept of the “3 Cs”: greater regional cooperation, collaboration and coherence**, to overcome contemporary challenges. In particular for LLDCs, such partnership should include transit developing countries as no single country can go this sustainable path alone. This also has to be multiplied manifold times more with the invaluable support from other development partners with their ODA channels.

We strongly believe that it is only through the joint settling the challenges of LLDCs we can enable our countries to achieve Agenda 2030 as many of our issues are common, interconnected and transboundary.

In this regards, UNCTAD’s activities take special place in the promotion of sustainable development in LLDCs. We express our gratitude to UNCTAD for the support to our countries including by undertaking substantive research on issues affecting our vulnerable group. **We call on UNCTAD to continue to provide LLDCs with technical and capacity-building support** in building our domestic capacities to achieve structural economic transformation, value addition, reduce commodity dependence, attract investment, and facilitate trade, amongst others.

Next year UNCTAD has two important high-level events: the upcoming 15th UNCTAD Conference to be held in Barbados in April 2020 and the World Investment Forum to be hosted by United Arab Emirates. So that, we would like to stress that it will be important for these meetings to deliver on issues of importance for LLDCs including relating to trade, transport, ICT, and structural transformation which can further accelerate the implementation of the VPoA. It is critical for us that the Group of LLDCs will fully engage in the process leading to the conference. Thus this briefing is important for our Group to hear the latest firsthand updates.

Distinguished colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that on 23 September the Ministers of LLDCs adopted the Ministerial Declaration and the special **Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA in its remaining five years**. We express our gratitude to UNCTAD for its active involvement in elaborating the Roadmap together with the OHRLLS.

Thus we are interested if **the leadership of UNCTAD could further see some practical strategies and stay committed for the next four years**. We very much look forward to your guidance in how we can concretely cooperate with you to synchronize our joint efforts, with priorities for LLDCs within your larger mandate.

In this light, it will be also important to see **how a greater focus can be given to LLDCs in your ongoing and future projects with possible greater financial outlays dedicated to this Group of countries**.

It would go a long way if in your monitoring and analytical exercises, there will be a broader special mention of LLDCs with guidelines of the progress made, and what action UNCTAD can further take.

Together with OHRLLS and UNCTAD **we can think of some analyses that could be undertaken without much financial implications but what would give us valuable pointers.**

We are highly interested in organizing interactive dialogues like today with UN agencies and other international stakeholders as well as private sector and academia representatives to bring tangible outcomes.

Taking this opportunity I would like to invite UNCTAD to continue to brief the LLDC Group on the work of this important agency and its support to our countries.

Thank you.
