



such as the Covid-19

Additionally, despite services sector emerging as key driver of economic transformation in these countries (contributing almost 50 % of GDP of LLDCs in 2023), the level of services exports in these countries remains low, accounting for less than 1 % of global services trade in 2023. The share of digitally deliverable services is much lower than services in general. While trade in services and e-commerce represent significant growth opportunities for LLDCs, these countries are often constrained by

access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy in recent years, only 28 % of the population have access to clean cooking.

The scale of infrastructure gaps faced by LLDCs significantly impedes their structural transformation and human development, and undermines their overall resilience to climate change, weather extremes and other related risks. To bridge these critical infrastructure gaps, massive investment will be required. The establishment of an infrastructure investment finance facility for LLDCs proposed in the new Programme of Action can be an instrument to close existing financing gaps to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support their economic development.

LLDCs rely on their transit neighbours for international trade via maritime transportation. Cumbersome transit procedures result in high trade costs and times. Reducing the transit and transport costs requires the full implementation of relevant international legal instruments, including international and conventions/treaties such as Part X of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Article V of GATT and Section I of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The high-level panel of experts proposed by the new Programme of Action could support means and ways to ensure seamless access to and from the sea for LLDCs. Regional integration initiatives, such as transport corridors can be an effective means for deepening cooperation in support of facilitating trade through specific routes, including for the LLDCs that are not WTO members. Strengthened and renewed partnerships at the global and regional levels will contribute substantively to filling in the gaps in transit, transport, and digital connectivity.

Fourthly, climate change and natural hazards severely impact LLDCs' development, often leading to land degradation, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity loss, and frequent and severe disease outbreaks. For the first time, this Programme of Action for LLDCs focuses on addressing these challenges by enhancing adaptive capacities, strengthening environmental resilience, and reducing risks and vulnerabilities. The new Programme of Action calls for the urgent and full implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and strengthening local, national, and regional DRR strategies and platforms.

Despite their minimal contribution to climate crisis, LLDCs are not receiving climate finance commensurate with their vulnerabilities, low resilience, and increasing financing needs. The new PoA highlights the need and urgency for sustainable and accessible climate finance (particularly for adaptation), capacity building and technology transfer so as to respond to the needs of these countries. These measures are essential to safeguard their progress on the SDGs and support the achievement of the other priority areas outlined in the new Programme of Action.

Lastly, global challenges have further constrained LLDCs increasingly limited fiscal space and public finances, making the strengthening of means of implementation crucial. The new Programme of Action emphasizes forging a new partnership focusing

the global challenges that the LLDCs are facing. The new Programme of Action determines a renewed and strengthened commitment by the LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, United Nations system and international, regional and subregional organizations, multilateral and regional development banks, and the international community as a whole. It is grounded in the overarching goals of addressing the special development needs, vulnerabilities and challenges of LLDCs arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints. This will be

## **Participation**

The Ministerial Meeting will be attended by Ministers and High-Level officials from the 32 LLDCs. Ministers and High-Level Officials from transit developing countries, development partners and high-level representatives of the UN system and other international and regional organizations will also be invited to participate.

## **Background Documents Available Online**

Draft New Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024-2034 (informal paper, endorsed by the LLDC3 Preparatory Committee while pending approval at the Conference)

Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024

2024 Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action

GA resolution A/RES/78/163 on the Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

GA resolution A/RES/76/217 on the Follow-up to the second UN Conference on LLDCs

GA resolution A/RES/77/246 on the Follow-up to the Second UN Conference on LLDCs

The outcomes of the three Regional Review Meetings on the implementation of the VPoA