



**STATEMENT BY**

**Honourable Lejone Mpotjoana**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, of the  
Kingdom of Lesotho,**

**During 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Foreign  
Affairs for Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs)**

**21 September, 2023**

**10 am- 1pm**

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Chairman,

presentation, read together with the United Nations Secretary General's 2023 Report on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024, paint a totally different picture from what we envisioned almost 10 years ago. For instance, the statistical indicators from the Secretary General Report reveal that during the 10-year period under review, inflation in LLDCs rose from 6.2% in 2015 to 20.5% in 2022, while the GDP growth rate on average dropped from about 6.8% in the previous decade (2003-2014) to an average of 3.8% between 2015 and 2023. Again, the average growth rate in LLDCs' exports of goods and services is said to have fallen by 53% from 8.6% for the period 2003-2013 to 4% in the 2014-2023 period.

investment opportunities. I should perhaps also, underscore as part of the SADC inter-country regional corridors, that we are nearing the completion of the construction of the Mokhotlong to Sani Top Road, and the reciprocal maintenance of the patch of that road on the South African side.

Secondly, by ratifying the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) in 2020, the Kingdom of Lesotho committed to full implementation of the Agreement, which is, by the way, the largest Free Trade Area in the world. To this end, in 2021, Lesotho dully developed the trade strategy focusing on textiles and apparel, Agro-processing and light industries sectors.

In this connection, we call on the development partners, including Member States comprising the Group of friends of LLDCs, the United Nations Development System, private sector, and other international organizations to strengthen their support measures for the full and timely implementation