



UN-OHRLLS

Remarks by

Ms. Rabab Fatima,
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

at the 22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign
Ministers of LLDCs on the theme

Building momentum
towards a new decade of action for prosperity and
resilience for LLDCs

21 September 2023
1000hrs - 1300 hrs
Conference Room # 6

His Excellency Mr. Lemogang Kwape, Foreign Minister of Botswana

His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the 78th session of the General Assembly

Her Excellency Ms. Paula Narvaez

implementation of the VPOA and the three regional review meetings.

Excellencies,

The situation in LLDCs continues to remain challenging.

Many of these challenges are systemic but have been made worse by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in different parts of the world, climate change, and other overlapping crises.

Thus, the last half of the implementation of the VPOA has been marked by stalled, and in some cases, even reversed socioeconomic progress.

Poverty levels remain well above global averages.

GDP levels have made a modest recovery since the pandemic but remain quite low.

The average GDP per capita in LLDCs has declined since the previous Programme of Action.

Inflation rose to 20.5% in 2022.

Pandemic-induced supply chain disruptions increased shipping costs, magnifying the geographical isolation of these countries, and making access to global markets even more difficult.

Excellencies,

As the VPOA draws to a close, we must draw lessons from our experience and make every effort to make the next Programme of Action, more ambitious and commensurate with the needs on the ground.

The Third UN Conference on LLDCs in Kigali, Rwanda next year, offers an important opportunity.

This will indeed be the moment to learn from the challenges of the past decade and ensure that the next decade is one of transformative change and real progress.

Excellencies,

In my capacity as the Secretary-General of the LLDC3, my Office is leading the UN-system-wide substantive preparations for the Conference.

I am pleased to inform you that we have had three very successful regional review meetings.

The Africa Regional review meeting was held in Gaborone, Botswana in May 2023.

This was followed by the Latin America Regional Review meeting held in Asuncion, Paraguay in July 2023.

The third and final one was the Euro-Asia regional review meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2023.

All these meetings had excellent participation from all stakeholders and adopted comprehensive

the Vice-Chairs, and Botswana and Rwanda on their elections as ex-officio Vice-Chairs.

Excellencies,

As part of the thematic preparations, we have held a good number of events during the past couple of months, including a dedicated session at the HLPF.

We plan to seize the opportunities of the upcoming COP-28, the WTO MC13, and other important moments to mobilize support for the Conference.

The other important events in the lead up to the Conference include:

A Ministerial-level Meeting on connectivity to be hosted by the Government of Armenia in November 2023.

An Ambassadorial retreat in early 2024.

A half-day joint UNGA and ECOSOC thematic meeting on the LLDC3 later this year.

And most importantly, the two sessions of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), to be held from 5-8 February 2024, and 29 April to 1 May 2024.

Excellencies,

We are also ensuring a whole of UN-engagement to support the Conference preparations.

I have held a first round of consultations with the RCs based in LLDCs. We will have further rounds of meeting with them in the coming days, to make sure that the RCs are fully anchored in the preparations at the national level.

The UN System entities have been mobilized to remain active in the process through the dedicated Interagency Consultative Group for LLDCs. They will be providing thematic reports which

My office as well will produce background papers and reports. We are finalizing a report on An assessment of the cost of being landlocked and progress on the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action

Excellencies,

Before I conclude, I would like to highlight some of the key priorities

Second, promoting structural economic transformation is vital for LLDCs.

The share of manufacturing value-added of LLDCs remained static at around 11% during the implementation period of the VPOA, down from 14% in 2000.

Enhanced partnership and support within different frameworks, including through WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, Aid for Trade, south-south and triangular cooperation, and African Free Trade Agreement can play a critical role in this regard.

Fourth: Climate change is affecting LLDCs heavily and must be more thoroughly addressed in the next POA.

LLDCs priorities must be fully integrated in the global climate discourse and processes, including the upcoming COP28.

Fifth: Means of implementation is the bedrock for advancing a successful development agenda thus, LLDCs need enhanced financing from all sources.

[In the last decade] Between 2014-2020, **ODA flows** to LLDCs increased from \$25 to \$35 billion. However, in 2021, the flow of ODA declined by 15%.

FDI flows to LLDCs declined from \$28.9 billion in 2014 to \$20 billion in 2022.

And around one third of the LLDCs are either in debt distress or at a high risk of it.

We need a comprehensive approach to deal with these issues, involving all stakeholders, including multilateral and bilateral donors, IFIs, MDBs, and Private Sector.

Finally, a robust follow up and review mechanism at the national, subregional, regional, and global levels on the implementation of the new POA, was identified as an important priority.

H«^a > ; Ministers, Excellencies,

This is not an exhaustive list.

We look forward to receiving further directions and recommendations, and new commitments, from °«Ÿšµ⁻ meeting. Those will further guide our upcoming preparatory work and will constitute important inputs for the outcome document of the LLDC3.

Let us harness our shared commitment and solidarity to drive transformative change in the lives of 570 million people living in 32 LLDCs and ensure that no one is left behind in our pursuit of sustainable development.

We need to set the course for an ambitious, and an action-oriented POA for the next decade of development of the LLDCs.

Before I conclude, allow me to make an early call to you all to ensure the highest level of participation from all LLDCs in Kigali Conference.

I wish to assure you, Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, that we will be with you every step of the way in ensuring an impactful and successful LLDC3 in Kigali.

I thank you.