



STATEMENT

BY

**Honourable Ms. Matšepo Molise- Ramakoae
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the
Kingdom of Lesotho**

**During the 21st Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign
Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries**

22 September 2022

10.00 AM – 13.00 PM

New York

**President of the General Assembly
Mr. Chairperson of the Group of LLDCs
Madam Deputy Secretary General
Madam USG OHRLLS**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. Chairperson, our Group has made significant strides under your able leadership assumed at the beginning of this year. My delegation remains confident that you will lead us to the successful execution of the work of our Group. As a current member of the Bureau of the LLDCS, we assure you of our unwavering support throughout your tenure of office.

Congratulations Excellency, Ms. Rabab Fatima for your well-deserved appointment as the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Madam Under Secretary General, we stand ready to offer you our unconditional support especially as you lead us in the next programme of action.

Excellencies

On top of a myriad of challenges hampering development in LLDCs, related to our landlockedness, the lack of access to the sea and global markets, Covid-19 has exacerbated the dire situation we are in and has thus reversed gains made in meeting the priorities of the Vienna Programme of action (VPoA) for LLDCs. This situation is even worse in LLDCs which are also LDCs and located in Africa as they are the hardest hit owing to the fragility of our health systems and limited social support and protection measures as well as lack of financial resources to address all these challenges. In this connection, Mr. Chairperson, we find this year's theme both timely and appropriate.

The recent Secretary General's Report on the implementation of the VPoA reveals that the rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs are an impediment to LLDCs to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of COVID- 19 pandemic. This indeed rings an alarm bell that unless there is enhanced international support towards recovery, it will be difficult for us to realise the implementation of the VPoA and other development agendas.

Mr. Chairperson

With just two years left before the end of the VPoA, **NOW** is the time to act! It is not too late for our Group to start to make concerted efforts aimed at fostering renewed and strengthened partnerships for the full and timely implementation of the VPOA as well as building back better in recovering from Covid-19. We are encouraged to learn that the Office of the High Representative and that of the Chairperson are considering to bring to life the Group of Friends of LLDCs which would be helpful in the acceleration of VPoA.

Mr. Chairperson

The United Nations System remains one of our strongest pillars in supporting the implementation of the VPoA as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Again, their commitment in addressing the adverse impacts of Covid-19 in our respective countries cannot be over emphasised. In this spirit, we call on them to further accelerate the implementation of the well calibrated Roadmap we adopted exactly two years ago.

