

Meeting of the Group of Friends of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

Wednesday, 23 November 2022, 9:00 am – 9:45 am

UN Secretariat, New York, Conference Room 11

SUMMARY

The first meeting of the revitalized Group of Friends of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)¹ took place on 23 November 2022 at the UN Secretariat in New York.

Convened by the Co-Chairs of the Group (Permanent Representatives of Austria, India and

that further exacerbate LLDCs' challenges. These include the lack of growth, rising energy and food prices, increasing shipping and trade costs, which in turn, impact the capacity of LLDCs to invest in climate adaptation and mitigation.

Citing the following quote from the UN Secretary-General "The perils we face are no match for a world united," Ambassador Marschik remarked that LLDCs' friends and partners and the UN were all united to support LLDCs. The Ambassador informed that the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Second Committee would, in the morning of 23 November 2022, take action on the resolution on 'Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries,' which would set out the milestones in preparation for the Third UN Conference on LLDCs in 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda. He congratulated H.E. Mr. Claver Gatete, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the UN, for hosting "this important Conference," assured him of Austria's full support, and invited the Group of Friends to engage in the preparatory process of the Conference in order to ensure the best possible outcome for the LLDCs.

H.E. Mr. Claver Gatete, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the UN, shared that Rwanda was very experienced in hosting major conferences, and that it was planning to host the Third UN Conference on LLDCs during the last week of May 2024. He invited participants to attend the Conference, adding that Kigali has various touristic activities that would be open for the occasion.

Based on concrete examples, the Ambassador shared the trade challenges faced by Rwanda as an LLDC, including the long waiting time for crossing at borders and the high trading fees, among other issues. He added that regional cooperation measures and cooperation with transit countries (including the harmonization of trade and transit procedures) had helped his country reduce trading time and costs.

He stressed the importance of the Group of Friends to share experiences with other countries in order to learn from each other. He also called on the Group to best prepare and support the Third UN Conference on LLDCs in order to "make the Conference a unique one".

H.E. Ms. Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Representative of India to the UN, noted that the Group of Friends is an "important rallying point" and a platform to strengthen support towards the LLDC. She added that the Group could play an "instrumental role" in supporting the stock-taking of the VPoA including the regional review meetings, thematic pre-conference events and other preparatory activities; and in helping to build intergovernmental consensus on LLDCs' priorities until 2030 (the SDGs' target year) and beyond.

Noting that India, as a transit country, was awa.03277.515D10nd

equipment. She noted that the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal initiative (BBIN) to strengthen economic cooperation and transport connectivity was geared to assist landlocked Nepal and Bhutan, and to provide BBIN countries greater access to global supply chains. She also mentioned extensive cooperation with LLDCs in the context of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund in sectors including information technology, infrastructure and water.

On preparations for the Third UN Conference on LLDCs, H.E. Ms. Kamboj stressed the need to identify gaps in the target areas of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda within LLDCs, and to seek solutions to enhance investment and technical assistance to bridge the gaps. Among other areas of focus, she mentioned economic diversification, productive capacity-building, innovation, skills

3. Remarks by Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Madam Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), congratulated and commended the Co-Chairs and the LLDC Chair for organizing “this very important meeting” and for taking the lead in revitalizing the Group of Friends of LLDCs. Having a development partner country, a transit country and the host of the next major LLDC Conference as Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends was, she remarked, a remarkable winning combination. She also welcomed the participation of many partner countries and transit neighbors of LLDCs in the meeting.

The Under-Secretary-General noted that the revitalization of the Group of Friends is very timely, especially as we approach 2024, which will mark the end of the 10-year Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, and an opportunity for the international community to recommit its support to the LLDCs at the Third United Nations Conference on LLDCs with a new programme of action. She called on the Group to be strongly involved in the Third Conference and in its preparatory process at the national, regional and global levels. She further outlined the crucial role of the Group of Friends in raising awareness and mobilizing support for the LLDCs to address their priorities and challenges, and in serving as a platform to strengthen international partnerships.

Under-Secretary-General Fatima reported that progress achieved over the past eight years (since the adoption of the VPoA) fell short of achieving the targets on all the priority areas, and that the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the ongoing geopolitical situation and conflicts had all taken their toll on LLDCs. In view of these challenges, she informed the Group that the UN Secretary-General was

4. Open floor discussion

Mr. Omar Kadiri, Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco to the UN, remarked that the Group of Friends will be critical to foster action-oriented initiatives, including meetings, and assured of his country's strong support to the Group. He reminded participants that Morocco hosted the Regional African Review in the lead-up to the Comprehensive High-Level Midterm review of the Implementation of the VPoA in 2019, and stressed the need to

ANNEX 1

Permanent Mission to