





South Cooperation Conference and the four high-level events scheduled during next year's General Assembly meeting. She stressed the need to support LLDCs in ensuring that their concerns and needs and voices are heard in these fora.

She informed the meeting that the midterm review of the VPoA is scheduled to take place next year, with New York as the fall back venue unless another country offers to host it. She reiterated that OHRLLS was mandated to coordinate the preparatory process and updated the participants on the progress so far. With respect to preparations at the global level, OHRLLS organized a Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on Trade and Transport in May in Kazakhstan, followed by the Inaugural Conference of the International Think Tank for LLDCs and a number of other events. With respect to regional preparations, OHRLLS in collaboration with regional commissions is fixing the details of the three regional review meetings and have already set the Euro-Asia regional review meeting for 11 and 12 February 2019. With respect to the national level, the LLDCs have been undertaking their national review processes. Ms. 'Utoikamanu encouraged the organizations present to continue to provide targeted support to LLDCs in implementing the VPoA and stressed that OHRLLS will continue to mobilize the UN system and international support for the effective implementation of the VPoA. She was hopeful that the review will

### C. Update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and consultations on the intergovernmental preparations for the midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLS firstly thanked all the agencies for contributing to the annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the VPoA, which was published in August 2018. She noted with concern that the report's results are indicative of mixed progress by LLDCs in achieving the priorities of the VPoA. She cited the main trends in the LLDCs, including the high rate of ratification, but low rate of implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; low trade integration; undiversified exports; inadequate infrastructure, particularly in the transport, energy and ICT sectors. Further, although LLDCs are taking steps to structurally transform and diversify their economies, the overall value-added of manufacturing sectors in LLDCs remains low, and the overall means of implementation remain inadequate, given the LLDCs' special needs.

Ms. Schroderus-Fox proceeded to outline the intergovernmental preparations for the midterm review, which she highlighted will be held no later than December 2019. She accentuated that UN Member States are presently negotiating the annual LLDC resolution, which will include detailed information about the midterm review such as its exact time, number of days of meetings, participation and consultations on the outcome document. She informed that the outcome document of the midterm review will be an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed political declaration, with the informal consultations facilitated by the Ambassadors of Bhutan and Austria who were recently appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

She mentioned that the preparatory process at the global level commenced with the meeting of LLDC Ministers of Trade and Transport in Kazakhstan in May which was followed by Inaugural meeting of the Think Tank for LLDCs in June. In addition, she noted that OHRLS organized thematic side events in the sidelines of international meetings, including an event on sustainable aviation for LLDCs' connectivity, accelerating energy transition in LLDCs, migration and climate change, and promoting investment in LLDCs. At the regional level, she highlighted that OHRLS is in close consultations with ESCAP, ECE, ECA and ECLAC to organize the three regional

Cairo. Other projects include the West African rail network to connect Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo; the grand Ethiopian renaissance dam; the Mombasa-Kigali Railway Project; the Grand Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the Bagamoyo Port in Tanzania. She made a specific reference to Ethiopia, where there is an emerging focus on public-funded infrastructure to encourage the movement of goods, services and people.

She stated that African LLDCs contributed around 0.21%

transformation and poverty reduction, discussing among others, productive capacity, rural development and human capital. With respect to Priority 6, ESCAP's CSNR 2017 centered on the investment requirements to close existing infrastructure gaps and identified financing sources and instruments available for LLDCs.

Mr. Roel Janssens, the representative of UNECE, conveyed the findings of the European requirements to the requirements for LLDCs.

for financing transport infrastructure”, highlighting the publication as a potential source of inspiration for LLDCs given its relevance to VPoA Priority 2.

Mr. Fabio Weikert, the representative of UNECLAC, recalled that during the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, held in May 2018, ECLAC again urged Member States to mainstream the VPoA into their national and sectoral development strategies and encouraged regional and sub-regional organizations to provide technical and financial support for the VPoA, as well as encouraging private sector contribution.

He asserted that ECLAC will provide support to the Government of Paraguay in organizing the regional review meeting. In addition, ECLAC is partnering with OHRLLS to select consultants who will work on the regional midterm report. Highlighting the importance of harnessing synergies between programs for LLDCs in the region and other initiatives, Mr. Weikert stressed that ECLAC has undertaken projects aimed at developing an information system on inland waterway transport for five countries in South America, including Paraguay and Bolivia.

He explained that ECLAC, along with ECE and ESCWA are cooperating entities of a UNDA Project focused

Tajikistan) have not as of yet. He pointed out that in total 139 WTO Members have now ratified the Agreement, representing 85% of the Membership. He described the progress that has been made regarding the notification of implementation commitments - all 26 LLDCs have made category A notifications and 20 LLDCs have notified articles under categories B and C. He explained that LLDCs have notified 34% of articles under category BT/F aT/F4 ,3(u)3(0)-3( )-2%5(u)3(n)3(d)3(e)9(r24(cs ))-3(g)14(o)-5(ryBT/F aTBJETC



that the mentioned countries have benefited from training courses offered at the Asia Regional Center of Excellence in Vietnam.

Ms. Hong Nguyen, the representative of WCO, elaborated on the Mercator Programme, the WCO's strategic initiative aimed at assisting governments worldwide in implementing the WTO's TFA in a uniform manner. She noted that, during the previous financial year, over 150 TFA-related missions were carried out under the Mercator Programme, based on requests from WCO Members. She highlighted that t

November in Kazakhstan during which many ideas were exchanged, particularly between countries in Central Asia.

In her remarks, Ms. Kadiatou Sall-Beye, the representative of ITU, outlined the agency's achievements towards the implementation of the VPoA, noting that ITU has mainstreamed the needs of the LLDCs in all its activities to support their ICT developments. She informed that in Rwanda, ITU implemented the Evaluation of the Wireless Broadband project in May 2018; in Botswana, ITU established a Communications Computer Incident Response Team to tackle cyber threats; in the Kyrgyz Republic, ITU



LLDCs. With respect to trade capacity building and value chain strengthening, UNIDO has undertaken projects such as the \$3.7m ENPARD project in Armenia, the \$2m project focused on the development of aquaculture and fisheries value chains in Ethiopia and the \$2.2m project on enhanced local value addition and strengthening value chains in South Sudan. With respect to food security and the income of the rural population, UNIDO has established a project that up-scales fishery practices from artisanal to commercial orientated in order to eleva

presentation during LLDC Group meeting in September 2018 highlighting the results that UNOPS and LLDCs have achieved together through projects in procurement, infrastructure, and capacity building.

#### D. Consultations on substantive preparations for the midterm review, including thematic pre-conference events and side events in the lead up to and during the midterm review

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief of UN-OHRLLS, emphasized that the outcome of the midterm review, which will be in the form of a political declaration, must be pragmatic, concise and focused on the swift implementation of the VPoA. He underlined the important role played by pre-conference events and activities in supporting the preparations of this outcome document and equipping LLDCs with strong substantive arguments for their negotiations with development partners.

He then gave an overview of the events that UN-OHRLLS has already co-organized. He mentioned the Ministerial Meeting on Trade and Transport, which was held in Kazakhstan in May 2018 and marked the first event of the preparatory process. He described some of the key recommendations for LLDCs of the resulting Astana Ministerial Declaration, including with regard to strengthening transport connectivity, promoting structural economic transformation, spurring international trade, ratifying relevant legal instruments, increasing support for regional integration initiatives, promoting e-commerce, implementing the WTO TFA and mobilizing private sector financing. He stressed that all the above areas must be tackled in the midterm review. He also informed of the inaugural meeting of the International Think Tank for the LLDCs which was held in Mongolia in June 2018 and culminated in the adoption of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration.

Mr. Erdenebileg elaborated on the two side events that UN-OHRLLS organized during this year's HLPF;

and running from November 2018 to October 2020. He explained that, as part of the project, regional and global reports on building resilient transport infrastructure in LLDCs will be prepared. He added that national reports are being written by the LLDCs on the implementation of the VPoA, whereas the regional commissions are working with UN-OHRLLS to prepare regional reports that will form background material for the regional review meetings. He also emphasized the value for the outcome document of the 2019 Report of the Secretary-General on VPoA, as well as recent analytical work on LLDCs done by the UN system and of intergovernmental processes at the global level.

He concluded by asking the organizations present to focus their interventions on describing what they think the key priority areas of the outcome document should be, and on

structural transformation and recommendations to tackle identified challenges. In concluding, she stated that UNCTAD will be launching a Productive Capacities Index for LLDCs prior to the midterm

## Annex I: List of Participants

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Annex III: Roadmap for the comprehensive high-





(18) Inter-Agency Consultative Meeting on LLDCs	UN-OHRLLS	Geneva April 2019
(19) Expert Group Meeting on Promoting science, technology, innovation and policies for achieving structural economic transformation and sustainable development in LLDCs	UN-OHRLLS	Geneva April 2019
(20) Retreat on LLDCs and MTR of VPoA	OHRLLS	New York May (TBC)
(21) Regional Review Meeting – Latin America Region	UN-OHRLLS, ECLAC	Asuncion, Paraguay June/July 2019
(22) Preconference event on Promoting Euro-Asian Transport and Trade Corridors to be held in Euro-Asia Region	OHRLLS, International Think Tank for LLDCs, ESCAP, UNECE	TBC July/August 2019
(23) Climate technology needs of LLDCs: the CTCN experience Description: Climate Technology Center and Network technical assistance in some LLDCs presentation	UNIDO	

Proposed Side Events at the Comprehensive High-Level Midterm  
Review of the VPoA

Event	Organizers	Date and venue
(1) Financing the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa's Landlocked Least Developed Countries through Strengthened Trade Ties Within the Framework of the AfCFTA	<u>UNECA</u>	
(2)		