

## **High-Level Africa Regional Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024**

**29-30 May 2023, Gaborone, Botswana**

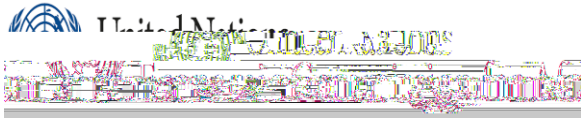
### **Concept Note**

#### **Introduction**

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in its resolutions 76/217 and 77/246, decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in 2024. The Conference aims to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) and to formulate and adopt a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of LLDCs and to strengthen partnerships between the LLDCs and transit countries and their development partners.

The General Assembly also decided that the Conference shall be preceded by national and regional-level reviews, as well as thematic preparations. In line with the decision of the General Assembly, the United Nations Office for Landlocked Developing Countries (UN-OLDC) is organizing a series of preparatory activities, including a regional-level review meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, on 29-30 May 2023. The meeting will be held in the presence of the High Level African Regional Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024.





merchandise exports decreased from 1.2% in 2014 to 0.98% in 2021. For African LLDCs, their share of merchandise exports in global exports has remained around 0.24% in 2021, that is, a 0.01% drop from 2014. The LLDCs, therefore, did not achieve the VPoA objective of substantially

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world witnessed an increase in e-commerce, especially in developed countries. Whilst e-commerce could play an instrumental role in helping developing economies including LLDCs to further integrate into global trade and value chains, these countries lag behind. Their key challenges include inadequate digital infrastructure and lack of policies to support e-commerce and the digital economy.

The WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation contains provisions for the expedited movement, release and clearance of goods across borders, including goods in transit, and it is expected to reduce trade costs by up to 17%. However, the rate of implementation of the Agreement remains low in LLDCs. As of 31 March 2023, LLDCs were fully implementing about 34% (Category A) of the measures of the TFA and for African LLDCs, this rate was about 32%. These countries are faced with capacity constraints to implement trade facilitation reforms.

The progress of LLDCs on regional integration has been considerable. On average, each LLDC is a party to 4 regional trade agreements, with the number of agreements per country ranging from 1 to 11. Several reports, including the 2021 African Integration Report, however have highlighted that the level of integration on the African continent is low overall. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a great opportunity to enhance the integration of African LLDCs as it is envisioned to result in reduced tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff barriers and ease trade facilitation hurdles. All African LLDCs have ratified the AfCFTA - a sign of their readiness to leverage the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA.

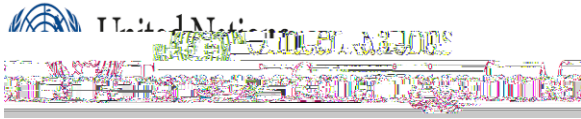
LLDCs in general have made limited progress toward structural transformation and have remained at the bottom of the value chains and continue to depend on a handful of commodities. In 2021, primary commodities accounted for 82% of merchandise exports from LLDCs, having declined from about 86% in 2014. The value-added contribution of the agriculture sector in these countries increased from 14.3% of GDP in 2014 to about 18% in 2021<sup>1</sup>. The value-added contribution of the manufacturing sector in LLDCs increased from 10% of GDP in 2014 to about 11% in 2021.<sup>2</sup> This is relatively low compared to the world average of about 17%.

On means of implementation, African LLDCs made efforts to raise domestic resources, however, the levels are low due to the large informal sector, weak and inefficient tax administration systems, prevalence of tax incentives, leakages in revenue collection and weak enforcement. Foreign investment trends in LLDCs have been anemic in the last 10 years. In 2021, combined FDI flows

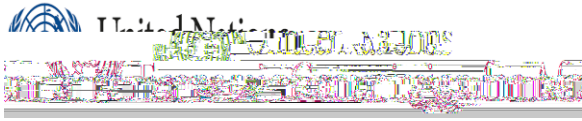
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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.MANF.ZS>



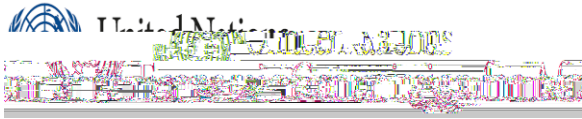
to the 32 LLDCs were only \$18 billion, only a little more than 1% of the total global FDI flows of \$1.6 trillion. by number of countries, the combined FDI inflows to African LLDCs was only \$7.8 billion in 2021. Total ODA commitments to LLDCs declined from \$24 billion in 2014 to \$20.2 billion in 2021. Many LLDCs in Africa are facing the challenge of rising debt, with some at risk of defaulting on their debt. At the end of 2022, three African LLDCs were debt distressed, five were at high risk and six were at moderate risk of debt distress.



an important background for the Preparatory Committee Meetings to be held in New York in early 2024.

**Participation**

The meeting will bring together ministers and



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