

**Distinguished Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee,
His Excellency Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent
Representative of Austria, and
His Excellency Mr. Enkhbold Vorshilov, Permanent
Representative of Mongolia,
Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,**

**I am delighted that the next Programme of Action for the LLDCs
has been agreed by consensus! I congratulate you all for this
remarkable achievement.**

**I congratulate and thank our co-chairs, Ambassador Mershick
and Ambassador Vorshilov, for their outstanding leadership in
steering this process to a successful conclusion.**

**I have seen how tirelessly you and your experts, Olivia and Ulzii,
have worked over the past four months to bring us to where we
are today.**

**I also thank the other members of the Bureau for their support
& guidance to the work of the PrepCom.**

I take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Gladys Mokhawa, the Permanent Representative of Botswana and Chair of LLDCs Group for her leadership, and for presenting an excellent zero draft on behalf of the Group, that provided a solid basis for the negotiations. I also acknowledge the tireless efforts of her expert Lorato and the core team, throughout the negotiating process.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all delegations, especially the development partners, for their constructive engagement, flexibility, and strong spirit of partnership.

Your dedication and collaboration have demonstrated that we are all united in a common purpose to support the LLDCs for a sustainable and more prosperous decade ahead.

The Programme of Action that has been agreed stands as a shared global compact.

It reflects the collective commitment of the LLDCs and their development partners with concrete targets and indicators.

The document aims to alleviate the hardships faced by the 576 million people of the 32 LLDCs.

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

The Programme of Action captures the most pressing challenges that LLDCs are currently grappling with.

It also suggests potential remedies to regain the lost ground of the SDGs, and commits to support the LLDCs in their transformative journey towards a resilient and prosperous future.

Let me highlight some of the most significant elements of the Programme.

First: despite the paramount importance of agriculture for the LLDCs economy, this sector struggles with low productivity and high vulnerability to various shocks. The new proposed agricultural research hubs can address such critical weaknesses and facilitate improved agricultural practices. It can also create further opportunities for structural transformation within the agricultural sector.

Second: the benefits of digital technologies have not been evenly spread within and across LLDCs. Internet usage in LLDCs is roughly half the global average; and usage among women remains lower still. The POA proposes new regional digital platforms and centers of science, technology, and innovation for peer-to-peer learning, training, and capacity building. These initiatives can be game changers for the LLDCs.

Third: LLDCs are unable to harness their full potential in international trade. Their share of global merchandise exports is only 1.1 percent, and their share of global exports of services is just 0.7 percent. The target set in the Programme of Action is to double this trade by 2034. The document also details the work needed to fully integrate LLDCs into the multilateral trading system.

Fourth: LLDCs face special challenges associated with their lack

Fifth: while LLDCs' infrastructure needs are rising, their investment capacities are dwindling due to budget constraints, high debt burdens, and cascading crises. The establishment of a dedicated infrastructure investment finance facility for LLDCs, as proposed in the POA, can open a new window of opportunities for LLDCs to meet their growing infrastructure finance needs.

Sixth: climate change and natural hazards severely impact

