Tech Envoy Office’s Inputs to Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked
Developing Countries for the Decade 2014 – 2024

II. An overview of recent socio-economic development in LLDCs including impact of COVID-19 pandemic
(The section will analyse recent developments in the social and economic situation of the LLDCs including
progress made by LLDCs on the SDGs and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on these countries. The
analysis will integrate gender and human rights.)
As the world now focuses on recovering from COVID-19 and faces new global challenges, we must
recognize the essential significance of digital technologies. However, although internet use had increased
during the COVID pandemic, 2.9 billion people still remain without access to internet. LLDCs are even
more seriously affected by this digital divide, because of challenges associated with geography and other
structural constraints. For instance, in 2021 the internet usage rate in LLDCs was 34.7%, far below the
world average of 63%.
This lack of basic connectivity and internet access means that LLDCs are unable to fully enjoy and engage
with the transformative potential of digital technologies. An important reason for limited access to
broadband is that broadband services remain unaffordable for most of LLDCs, broadband costs are
comparatively higher than in coastal countries, due to their remoteness from submarine communication
cables, and hence, need to access fiber optic submarine cables through cross-border connectivity, which
largely depends on transit infrastructure, political relations with neighbors, and administrative processes
in transit.
The Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology is now working closely with partners, including
the Office of the High Representative, to implement the Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital
Cooperation, with key action points in areas such as global connectivity and digital capacity-building.
These are critical in supporting the Vienna Plan of Action, which calls for LLDCs to make broadband policy
universal, promote open and affordable internet access for all and actively engage to address the digital
divide.
III. Status of implementation of the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action
(The section will assess the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA highlighting the major
progress and challenges experienced including due to COVID-19. The specific sub sections will be namely:
Fundamental Transit Policy issues; Infrastructure Development and Maintenance; International Trade and
Trade Facilitation; Regional Integration and cooperation; Structural economic transformation; Means of
implementation.)
N/A
IV. Follow-up and review and progress on Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna
Programme of Action in the remaining five years
(The section will highlight progress in other activities of the United Nations system and other international
organizations relating to implementation of the priorities of the VPoA including the Roadmap for
accelerated implementation of the VPoA.)

sector investment in sustainable network infrastructure and practical digital capacity-building initiatives.
Lessons learnt and good practices from successful private sector efforts and pilots in areas such as digital
connectivity, capacity-building and digital transformation should be shared and countries with similar
challenges.
3. Fully recognize the needs and priorities of the LLDCs in global digital discussions
Promoting Internet connectivity and digital capacity-building is not a standalone goal from other
objectives; LLDCs should harness digital technologies for their environment and social-economic
developments. Given variances within and among countries and regions, there is no one-size-fits-all
approach. Greater understanding and country/local level studies are thus needed of which connectivity
and capacity-building approaches are most effective, considering political, economic and social contexts.