

And LLDCs continue to face high trade costs, struggling with inadequate physical, digital and energy connectivity.

As we know, LLDCs are also greatly impacted by environmental factors. Climate change, land degradation, desertification, droughts, melting of glaciers, environmental degradation and disasters these all hit LLDCs disproportionately.

The challenges were already stark and the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated many of the challenges facing the LLDCs.

All major macroeconomic indicators were negatively impacted.

Growth in real gross domestic product fell from 4.3% in 2019 to -2.4% in 2020 and grew by only 4.1% on average in 2021, which is insufficient to reverse the increase in poverty due to COVID-19.

Merchandise exports declined by 11% to \$168 billion in 2020 and increased by 28% to \$217 billion in 2021.

FDI contracted by 31% in 2020, the lowest level since 2007.

Migrant remittances fell by 6% in 2020 and tourism came to a virtual standstill.

Border crossing restrictions enacted due to the pandemic had a severe impact on already difficult trading arrangements.

Clearly, immediate and sustainable recovery efforts are needed to restore progress.

At the request of the Chair of LLDCs a Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA was developed and adopted by the

The Roadmap contains activities and deliverables being implemented

