



Statement by H.E. Bob Rae (Canada)

President of the Economic and Social Council

Landlocked Developing Countries Annual Ministerial Meeting

26 September 2024

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The upcoming LLDC3 Conference in Gaborone will be an important opportunity for LLDCs to spotlight the distinctive challenges they face. With the theme “Building momentum towards Gaborone: Partnering for a Decade of Action and Transformation in LLDCs,” the event aims to foster stronger partnerships between LLDCs, transit countries, and global development partners.

The circumstances of LLDCs, require tailored and context-specific responses:

- Growth in LLDCs remains 1.5% lower than in other developing nations due to a lack of diversified industries and limited access to global markets.
- LLDCs face transport costs that are up to 50% higher compared to coastal countries, reducing competitiveness.
- More than 60% of roads in LLDCs are unpaved, severely impacting trade.
- Over 35 million people in LLDCs face acute food insecurity. In 2023, food prices in LLDCs rose by 8%, intensifying food insecurity.
- LLDCs' debt service payments increased by 15% in 2023, adding pressure to public finances.

The new programme of action for LLDCs will focus on several key issues, including trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and climate resilience, none of which can be addressed by a single country, or even the group of LLDCs alone. Those issues must be addressed within a framework to enhance regional and global integration, as well as global efforts and commitments.



Structural transformations will be key to enabling LLDCs to diversify their economies, scale up decent work and advance regional integration. The LLDC3 conference is an opportunity to prioritize the drivers of structural change including the diversification of economies, increased productivity and employment which can activate economic growth and development.

Addressing climate change, including by garnering more climate finance will be critical. LLDCs continue to suffer the consequences of the climate crises, including drought and desertification which impacts their agriculture-based economies and livelihoods. LLDC3 must underscore the importance of ensuring that development partners are meeting their climate finance commitments and supporting LLDCs to address their climate adaptation needs and quell the impacts of disasters.

Transport infrastructure will be an important focus. Inadequate transport infrastructure with missing links, dependence on transit neighbours, and cumbersome transit and border requirements add to the challenges caused by the mere physical distance to ports and markets. To access markets and improve trade, transport and infrastructure must be prioritized.

Digital connectivity and the growing digital divide also prove challenging for LLDCs, requiring improvement in digital infrastructure and advancements in modern energy production. It is important to ensure that LLDCs have access to science, technology and innovation, including through North-South, South-South and Triangular cooperation as they can offer critical solutions.

Partnership and financing are at the core of achieving the new programme of action for LLDCs. We must scale up financing to LLDCs, through all sources, public and private, domestic and international. However, we must also ensure that the right type of finance is being channeled to the right places. We must ensure that all financing partners are at the table, to find long-term solutions that are durable. The fourth International Conference on Financing for Development next year will be crucial in this regard.

ECOSOC will be an important partner in advancing the priorities of LLDCs. ECOSOC offers critical platforms and subsidiary bodies to support LLDCs.



The ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, Partnership Forum, STI Forum, Forum on Financing for Development and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development have consistently emphasized the need for enhanced global cooperation to address the unique challenges of LLDCs. I look forward to your participation in these key discussions.

ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including regional commissions, functional commissions and expert bodies, have fostered dialogue and creative thinking on trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and climate resilience. ECOSOC remains committed to ensuring that they will support the implementation of the new programme of action for LLDCs.

As President of the Council, I stand with you as we look ahead to LLDC3. Let us build on the momentum of the Pact of the Future and its Global Digital Compact and Declaration for Future Generations. LLDCs hold great potential, and this is an opportunity to realize that potential for current and future generations.

Thank you.