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Our Future  
Together

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur  
Thapa, President of Economic and Social  
Council  
Civil Society Forum  
Monday, 4 August 2025, 11:00 – 13:00  
AM  
Awaza, Turkeministan**

**Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,  
Dear friends in civil society,**

It is a privilege to join you at this landmark Civil Society Forum – the first of its kind at an LLDCs Conference.

It is a powerful signal of the voice and value of civil society in driving global progress.



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Civil society brings urgency, innovation, and voice to the Awaza Programme of Action – and your leadership will be essential to also ensure its full implementation.

**Dear Friends,**

We meet at a pivotal moment.

LLDCs continue to face steep structural barriers - from high transport costs and limited market access to escalating climate and economic shocks.

The pandemic set back hard-won gains. And today, many landlocked countries remain at the margins of global trade, investment, and connectivity.

But alongside these challenges, I also see determination. Solutions. And hope.



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Much of that is coming from you - civil society leaders, working tirelessly in communities to advance sustainable development.

From building climate resilience to expanding digital access, from advocating for fairer financial systems to supporting rural livelihoods, you are turning global goals into local action.

And your role is not peripheral.

You are co-creators of solutions, watchdogs of accountability, and champions of inclusion.

**Dear colleagues,**

The Awaza Programme of Action is more than a policy framework.

It is a blueprint for transformation,

It aims to bridge both digital and physical connectivity gaps, promote smart agriculture, expand e-commerce, and scale digital health solutions.



But it will only succeed if it reflects the realities on the ground and is implemented through inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships.

This Forum is part of that effort.

It is a space to share ideas, shape priorities, and build alliances.

As we begin today's dialogue on people-centered transformation and sustainability, let us be clear: the status quo is not working.

We need new models of development - inclusive, green, and resilient.

And as we look ahead to tomorrow's discussions on digital innovation and financing for development, we must ensure that technology empowers, and that finance delivers for people - not just for markets.



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Your active engagement and solidarity will be key to the effective implementation of Awaza Program of Action.

Your voices will help shape how we implement the Awaza Programme of Action - not just in policy, but in practice.

Delivering on the Awaza Programme of Action is a shared responsibility.

Governments, the private sector, the UN system, and civil society must come together in genuine partnership.

ECOSOC stands ready to support that collaboration.

As the UN's principal platform for sustainable development, ECOSOC is committed to promoting inclusive multilateralism and people-centered solutions.



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Under my presidency, ECOSOC is focused on “**delivering better**” - with key priorities that speak directly to the needs of LLDCs, including climate resilience, expanding digital inclusion, transforming food systems for local impact, and mobilizing financing that reaches communities, empowers youth, and supports those furthest behind.

I will continue to strengthen the voice and participation of civil society in all the forums and segments under ECOSOC during my presidency.

**Colleagues,**

This Forum is not a side conversation - it is integral to the future we are building together.

Your insights will shape not only the outcome of this conference, but also our work across ECOSOC and the broader UN system.



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So let us use this moment to push forward - with purpose and solidarity.

ECOSOC stands with you - as a platform, a partner, and a champion of inclusive development.

Thank you.