

**Statement of the Chair of the Group of LLDCs
at the 2020 ECOSOC Integration Segment
6 July 2020, New York, virtual platform**

Thank you Ambassador Margarian.

Distinguished panelists,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Landlocked developing countries.

The LLDCs welcome the 2020 session of the ECOSOC Integration Segment. It is a timely opportunity to explore the new opportunities for better integration, agendas' alignment and cooperation among the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies and the UN agencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time. Today, COVID-19 also marks a severe development challenge for especially vulnerable countries like LLDCs, half of which is the Least developed countries. It is now evident that the pandemic is much more than a health crisis. It is resulting in significant socio-economic impacts. It affects the ability of LLDCs to achieve the goals of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and Agenda 2030.

The Landlocked Developing Countries are amongst the most vulnerable ones because of objective and subjective constraints to growth and development. Those binding constraints are as follows: isolation from global markets, dependence on few export products and the will of transit neighbours, small size, lack of productive capacities, structural challenges, climate change and vulnerability to external shocks. All this leads to long-term ripple effects. As global output is projected to decline sharply, it is estimated that the LLDC economies will face significant contraction in 2020 as their growth rate will be about „- 0.3“ per cent.

As we have Ambassador Braun, Chair of CPD with us today, I would like to underline that the LDCs after their graduation will still be left against the challenges of being geographically isolated from oceans and global markets. Thus, we see it as a huge double hurdle on the way of their development and we should address this aspect accordingly.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The COVID-19 crisis demands decisive action now.

First, our Group of vulnerable states would like to recommend to consider as an example of best practices the UN systemwide integrated approach in designing the UN Roadmap on Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. The Roadmap was recently developed by the UN-OHRLLS in close cooperation with many other interested UN agencies, including FAO, ILO and UNDP. This collective document has practical deliverables for LLDCs. It assists our 32 vulnerable countries to reach sustainable development goals in the Decade of Action and recover better after the pandemic. To our opinion, ECOSOC should lead and replicate the UN

systemwide collective approach of coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency in tackling common challenges.

Second, the pandemic has made it more clear that many of the issues and challenges are of cross-boundary and even cross regional nature. Thus, it demands urgent recovery measures from the UN system delivering as One.

In this vein, we believe that further redesigning of the cooperation among ECOSOC structural bodies and other UN agencies is needed. We need to bring a new focus from the country-specific approach to a stronger regional and interregional focus.

It will help small size economies to scale up the engagement of private sector and other international organizations in the wider region and beyond. This outreach would be of particular interest to LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, the developing countries and economies in transition.

Third, we recommend to Governments and Organizations to collaborate and integrate deeper to keep cross-border connectivity and regional transport networks open as much as possible. Facilitating smooth movement of goods and keeping borders open for trade are also fundamental for our countries.

I thank you.
