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OPENING REMARKS

BY

**H.E. MR. COLLEN V. KELAPILE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)**

AT

**SIDE EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MONGOLIA,
INTERNATIONAL THINK TANK FOR LLDCs AND ESCAP ON
“CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL (IN TRASPOT AND THROUGH AI)”**

**DURING THE 78TH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMISION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**25 MAY 2022
16:15-17:15 Hours**

**BANGKOK, THAILAND
UN CONFERENCE CENTRE – ESCAP HALL**

Please check against delivery.

- **Excellencies;**
- **Madam Executive Secretary;**
- **Distinguished Participants;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

1. I am delighted to participate in this side event, that is organized by the Government of Mongolia in partnership with key actors in the connectivity area - - ESCAP, UN-OHRLLS, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries -- focusing on the topical issue of **“Connectivity for All (In Transport and Through AI).”**
2. In my capacity as Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) for the period 2022-2023, I take this opportunity to commend the sterling role performed by Mongolia as a member of the Bureau and Vice- Chair.
3. The critical importance of inclusive and sustainable connectivity for all cannot be overemphasized,

especially in this highly globalized and interconnected world.

4. Today's side event provides an opportunity to address the connectivity challenges experienced by Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), with particular focus to those in Asia.
5. The connectivity challenges of LLDCs were brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic when lockdown measures were put in place, unleashing consequential disruptions in supply chains and thus hindering the ease of access to both regional and global trade markets.
6. However, these restrictions also compelled LLDCs to develop their capacities for innovation using existing and new technologies.
7. I am glad that this side event will showcase both established and new solutions, that were devised to deal with the prevailing connectivity challenges.

8. Examples include the use of artificial intelligence, transport corridors, dry ports and intermodal linkages together with smart connectivity along the Asian Highway Network.
9. Through the use of these solutions, LLDCs were transformed into Land-Linked Countries, thereby easing their remoteness to regional and global markets.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

10. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has platforms that assist Member States to deal with connectivity challenges and to set global norms and standards. The **ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum (FfD Forum)**, for example, discusses issues relating to financing for sustainable development, as well as policies and strategies that encourage the private sector to assist developing countries to fund their development needs.

11. The **ECOSOC Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI Forum)**, on other hand, assists Member States, especially developing countries, including LLDCs, to build their capacities in science, technology and innovation.
12. The Council also promotes regional cooperation and approaches, aimed at ensuring connectivity for all.
13. In this regard, I wish to applaud the work ESCAP is doing in this area. It is only through joint initiatives and partnerships that we could be able to bridge the connectivity divides and to strengthen the links of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
14. The United Nations Secretary-General in his report on "**Our Common Agenda**" also underscored the importance of sub-regional organizations and regional and sub-regional frameworks in supporting effective transformation and sustainable development.
15. As we will hear from the interventions that will follow, the Asia-Pacific region is already harnessing benefits

from these joint initiatives and partnerships. Sustainable Development Goal number 17 stresses the importance of partnerships in delivering the SDGs.

16. I look forward to interventions that will highlight transport connectivity in Asia-Pacific region, the necessary infrastructure, policies and regulatory frameworks needed to ensure connectivity for all, and the financial, technical and technological support that the countries in the region have received in this area.

17. **I thank you for your kind attention, and wish you fruitful deliberations.**