



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

(UN-OHRLLS)

Report of the Sixth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

Conference Room S-4, Palais des Nations, Geneva

11 April 2018

A. Introduction

The Sixth Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs was held in Geneva on 11 April 2018. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The IACG provided a platform for the participating organizations to update each other on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), as well as consult on the preparations for the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA.

The meeting was chaired by UN-OHRLLS and opened by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS. The meeting was attended by participants from 22 different institutions as shown in the participant list in annex 1. The meeting followed the agenda presented in annex 2.

B. Opening Session

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS welcomed the participants and assured them that the USG and High Representative attaches foremost importance to this inter-agency collaboration and coordination mechanism as a crucial element in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. She expressed appreciation to the Ambassador of Paraguay for attending the meeting. She informed that Paraguay is now Global Chair of LLDCs and also remains Coordinator on Trade Issues in Geneva.

She briefed the participants that LLDCs continue to make progress in the implementation of the priority areas of the VPoA, in particular in areas such as accession to key trade and transport facilitation agreements, including the Trade Facilitation Agreement; reducing transit travel times; expanding and upgrading of road and rail transport infrastructure; improving energy and ICT access; implementing initiatives to speed up transit and border-crossings between LLDCs and transit countries; as well as making efforts to transform their economies. At the same time, she noted that lack of progress is seen in declining share of LLDCs exports, de-industrialization trends, declining aid and foreign investment to LLDCs; and more efforts are also needed to implement the transit and trade facilitation agreements, diversify the LLDC economies, address the persistent high costs of trade and close missing links.

She stressed that the effective implementation of the VPoA remains a priority for the work of OHRLLS at all levels. She noted that the High Representative has been advocating since her appointment for all stakeholders at the national and regional levels to be fully engaged in the mainstreaming and implementation of the SDGs and the Vienna Programme of Action, hand in hand. At the global level, she noted that OHRLLS will continue to call for fostering of coherence in the follow-up and monitoring processes of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements and processes. Ms. Schroderus-Fox recalled that the USG and High Representative wrote to the Heads of the organizations, requesting for inputs to the annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the VPoA, with a deadline of 30 April, and urged for continued cooperation in this matter.

In terms of going forward, she noted that OHRLLS will rely on the UN system and other international organizations to support the process of the preparations for the midterm review of the VPoA and to actively contribute and engage in the discussions. She also noted that OHRLLS will continue to follow closely the ongoing UN Development System reform process led by the Secretary-General and support

the LLDC Group in the negotiations to help ensure that the Group stays fully engaged in the process and that their priorities and concerns are adequately reflected. She concluded by emphasizing the need to pull together available resources and capacities towards raising global awareness of the LLDC challenges and special needs, enhancing their participation in relevant fora, and mobilizing financial and technical support for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

In his remarks, **H.E. Mr. Juan Esteban Aguirre Martinez, Permanent Representative of Paraguay and the LLDC Coordinator on Trade in Geneva**, noted that close to the half way point in the implementation of the VPoA, the LLDCs face new opportunities as well as challenges. He explained that the main efforts of LLDC continue to focus on diversifying and restructuring their economies. He stressed the importance of creating linkages to regional and global value chains. He said that in addition to national efforts, LLDCs need more access to finance, health, education and investment.

He highlighted that there are good examples, good models out there that need to be replicated further. He called for the need to create synergies with economies of transit countries, in order to justify the investments in cross-border infrastructure, noting that economic and trade benefits must be mutual. He emphasized the importance of real and functional corridors. The Ambassador explained that while negotiating the UNCTAD 14 document, Paraguay worked to include a mandate for UNCTAD in field of transit, as well as provisions on structural transformation, e-commerce and digital economy, which are essential components in the implementation of the VPoA.

He further called on UNCTAD, as well as other agencies, to help LLDCs strengthen the activities in the context of national UNDAFs, while explaining that national efforts and national planning need to be in line with attainments of the SDGs, in order to successfully move forward. He recalled the synergies between the SDGs and the VPoA and stressed that the VPoA needs to be reflected in national planning. He thanked OHRLLS for the support provided to the LLDCs and for supporting the process of negotiating the VPoA and bringing in the various stakeholders to the table. He called on UN system support in creating convergence in the implementation of the SDGs and VPoA, noting that the midterm review of the VPoA will provide an opportunity for that.

C. Update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the LLDCs

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, UN-OHRLLS briefed the meeting on the UN General Assembly Resolution A/72/232 on the Follow-up to the Second UN Conference on LLDCs that was adopted by the General Assembly last December. She highlighted that despite difficult negotiations, the LLDCs did not lose any substantive issue and were even able to add several new issues in the resolution, including a new paragraph on the importance of air transport for LLDCs, paragraph on links between infrastructure, industry and innovation, recognition of inclusive and sustainable industrialization as integral element for the structural transformation of economies of the LLDCs, recognition of the critical role of the private sector in the development of LLDCs and mobilization of private resources for their development, and strengthening of infrastructure paragraphs. She explained that the resolution also includes the entry into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, calls for its implementation and call for technical and capacity-building assistance, as well as the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs, including invitation to relevant stakeholders to

support the Think Tank. In addition, the resolution also includes few paragraphs on the midterm review of the VPoA.

Mr. Raul Torres, the representative of WTO, updated the meeting in trade facilitation, Aid for Trade and outcome of WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11). He indicated that by MC11, 126 countries ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), representing 77% of WTO members. With regards to notifications, by 15 March 2018, 111 developing countries, including 24 LLDCs made category A notifications; 61, including 16 LLDCs made category B notifications; and 50, including 15 LLDCs made category C notifications. He explained that more than 54% of TFA provisions are already subject to a commitment. He further indicated that transparency notifications have also been received: 22 members made notifications under import, export and transit procedures, 16 members on single window; 19 on use of customs brokers and 17 on customs cooperation. Mr. Torres noted that WTO with OHRLLS and several other agencies, began to look at concrete projects to help in implementation of TFA and identified border agency cooperation as one area where LLDCs would require assistance, with the aim to set up project funded by the TFA facility to help, on a regional basis, transit countries and LLDCs on issues of border agency cooperation.

With regards to Aid for Trade, he highlighted that the key message of the 2017 Aid for trade global review was the need to focus on connectivity, physical and digital, noting that digital divide can be also viewed as an issue of lack of market access and that there is need for additional Aid for Trade financing to help bridge this digital divide. The Aid for Trade at a Glance report illustrates how improved physical and digital connectivity are lowering trade costs and reducing poverty. He indicated that the review also emphasized close synergy between Aid for Trade and SDGs and 2030 Agenda. He indicated that almost \$300 billion has been disbursed for aid-for-trade support since the Aid for Trade Initiative was launched in 2006. He noted that disbursements to LLDCs were close to \$6 billion in 2015, an increase from \$5.5 billion in 2014, and raising the total of disbursements to LLDCs in 2006-2015 to over \$50 billion. He also noted that WTO is working on the next Aid for trade biennial work programme, which will focus on economic empowerment.

With regards to the MC11, Mr. Torres noted that progress was made in some areas, such as fisheries subsidies, but most substantive outcomes were not possible such as on agriculture stockholding and domestic support in agriculture. In terms of the way forward, while acknowledging lack of progress, WTO members committed to move forward on the remaining issues, including agriculture, non-agricultural market access, services, development, TRIPS, rules, and trade and environment. Mr. Torres also indicated that several new areas where interest was shown to advance talks was on electronic commerce, investment facilitation and MSMEs, as well as women and trade, and many WTO members have announced plans to pursue further negotiations. In concluding, Mr. Torres informed that Deputy Director-General Agah will provide a briefing on MC11 to Member States in New York on 13 April.

Mr. Moritz Meier-Ewert, a representative of UNCTAD, gave an overview of UNCTAD's support to LLDCs in the key priority areas of the VPoA. He noted that LLDCs seen sharp slowdown in growth from 7% in 2014 to 5.6% in 2015 and 2.6% in 2016. On Priority 1, he informed that UNCTAD assisted 18 LLDCs and 17 transit countries with implementation of WTO TFA with emphasis on transit cooperation issues, as well as worked with a number of regional groupings on transit cooperation and also cooperated in the development of the WCO Transit Guidelines. On priority 2, UNCTAD worked with the northern corridor and central corridor authorities on developing sustainable freight transport strategies. On energy and ICT, he recalled UNCTAD's LDC 2017 report which focused on the role of energy in sustainable development;

UNCTAD's assistance to several LLDCs in preparation of science, technology and innovation reviews such as Rwanda; and conduct of e-trade readiness assessment in Bhutan and Nepal, with plans for Lesotho and Afghanistan this year. On Priority 3, he said that UNCTAD supported Botswana and Zambia in preparing trade policy frameworks and conducted Paraguay services policy review. He stressed that UNCTAD is also providing LLDCs with WTO accession through advisory missions as well as post-accession assistance and also recalled the ASYCUDA programme which is active in 23 LLDCs.

With regards to Priority 4, he noted UNCTAD's support to CAFTA and TFTA negotiation processes. He also recalled that UNCTAD also has project on assisting African LLDCs in strengthening regional value chains, in cooperation with other agencies. On Priority 5, he highlighted UNCTAD's work on benchmarking productive capacities and developing an index on productive capacities, explaining that preliminary results were presented in a workshop in Botswana and further workshops are planned in Lao PDR and Rwanda to finalize this work this year. He also noted UNCTAD's technical assistance on diversification for energy exporting LLDCs in Asia. Mr. Meier-Ewert mentioned a side event on Unlocking the potential of SMEs in LLDCs, organized with OHRLLS and other partners during the Financing for Development Forum. He emphasized that UNCTAD is also providing assistance in area of investment and investment policy reviews are available for almost half of the LLDCs, while noting assistance to a number of regional groups in reviewing their model international investment agreements. He concluded by highlighting the growing demand for technical assistance and capacity building assistance from LLDCs.

Ms. Hong Nguyen, the representative of WCO, gave a brief overview of WCO, noting that all LLDCs are WCO members. She gave an overview of WCO's strategic goals, highlighting its four strategic packages, namely Economic Competitiveness Package, Revenue Package, Compliance and Enforcement Package and Organizational Development Package. She stressed that the WCO has a prominent role in promoting trade facilitation through securing and facilitating legitimate global supply chains, developing international standards and recommendations and at the same time, supporting the implementation of the WTO's TFA. WCO's main instruments in facilitating transit goods include the Revised Kyoto Convention (19 LLDCs are contracting parties), SAFE Framework of Standards, and the Transit Guidelines. She also highlighted recent WCO tools and guidance related to the implementation of the TFA, such as the Guidelines for Customs to Business partnership, National Trade Facilitation Committees and Advance Rulings.

She emphasized that WCO supports the LLDCs also via its Mercator Programme launched in 2014 with the objective to support the sustainable and effective implementation of the WTO TFA. She acknowledged that the WCO works closely with donors, supporters and partners in the implementation of the Mercator Programme. Ms. Nguyen informed that WCO conducted 420 capacity building missions since the launch of the Mercator programme, more than 11 scoping diagnostic missions, and with its tailor-made track piloted in 6 countries. She highlighted that the WCO is also undertaking capacity-building on transit via several activities including the publication of the Transit Guidelines (with contributions from many international and regional organizations) and providing a series of regional workshops to assist countries in implementing the efficient transit procedures. The first regional workshop on Transit for the WCO Members from the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region was conducted from 22 to 24 November 2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa with the participation of more than 70 participants from over 50 entities. The second regional workshop for the WCO West and Central Africa (WCA) region was organized in Cotonou, Benin from 11 to 13 April 2018. Other transit workshops for the remaining regions will be organized in 2018/2019 and the Second Global Transit Conference will be organized and details will be shared soon.

Ms. Dagmar Hertova, UN-OHRLLS, informed the participants of recent and upcoming activities of UN-OHRLLS. She noted that Expert Group Meeting on Financing Infrastructure Development for Enhanced Integration of LLDCs into Global Trade was organized by OHRLLS last October, and that a final report on infrastructure financing for transport sector in LLDCs will be released in the next few weeks. She then informed that the Agreement on the Establishment of the Think Tank for LLDCs entered into force in October last year, and OHRLLS together with the Interim Secretariat of the Think Tank organized a high-level luncheon event for LLDCs on that occasion. She further noted that 12 LLDCs are now members of the Think Tank and have been appointing their representatives for the Board of Governors, which will decide on the operational aspects of the Think Tank. She informed that an inaugural meeting of the Think Tank is planned to be held in Mongolia on 11 and 12 June this year, preceded by meeting of the Board of Governors. She briefed on the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of the LLDCs held in Buenos Aires in the margins of the WTO Eleventh Ministerial Conference last December, which in particular emphasized the need to address high trade costs faced by the LLDCs, the need for accelerated implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement as well as the need for structural transformation of the LLDCs and diversification of their exports.

Ms. Hertova also noted that OHRLLS has participated in several transport related meetings and initiatives to raise the awareness of the VPoA and the needs of the LLDCs, including being an active member of the Sustainable Mobility for All initiative, in particular the Group of Efficiency, participating in the ECE Inland Transport Committee session in February 2018 and organizing events as part of the Aviation Partnership for Sustainable Development, together with ICAO, OHRLLS, DESA, World Bank and ATAG, to raise awareness of air transport for sustainable development of LLDCs. In addition, she explained that OHRLLS continues supporting the LLDC Group in New York in the ECOSOC, HLPF and other global follow-up processes, with the aim of promoting the aim of leaving no one behind and ensuring that the Vienna Programme of Action is coherently mainstreamed into the global processes. She highlighted that a number of LLDC focused side events are planned in this context, including a side event with partners on the potential of SMEs to accelerate structural economic transformation in the LLDCs on 25 April and side events on aviation, energy, and infrastructure development during the HLPF.

Mr. Erdenebileg, UN-OHRLLS added information on UN-Transport, an initiative of 30-40 UN system organizations led by DESA. He noted that terms of reference have been developed and are to be endorsed by the UN Secretary-General. He explained that there are special provisions in the TOR related to the LLDCs, including reference to transit and border crossing issues and that priority attention should be given to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and the respective programmes of action. Mr. Erdenebileg also expressed interest of OHRLLS in strengthening of existing partnerships.

Mr. Purevdorj Vaanchig, a representative of WIPO highlighted areas of work relevant to LLDCs, noting that WIPO is providing range of technical assistance programmes for LLDCs that are LDCs through its LDC Division and that other LLDCs benefit from technical assistance and projects extended through regional bureaus of WIPO's development sector as well as other sectors. He noted that WIPO's technical cooperation focus mainly on enhancing access to knowledge strengthening technological capacity and developing IP related institutional frameworks.

He noted that to overcome their challenges, LLDCs need to address structural constraints, including through improving policy and regulatory environment for business, enhancing trade facilitation, strengthening infrastructure, developing skilled workforce and increasing productivity of main industries. He suggested that technology provides some solutions for these issues and that WIPO provides the

resource base for accessing scientific and technological information such as Access to Research for Development and Innovation (ARDI) and the Access to Specialized Patent Information (ASPI) for countries to build their productive capacity. He posited that technology transfer can play greater role in raising productivity and competitiveness of LLDCs and that WIPO's technical assistance can be instrumental in structural economic transformation and capacity building, contributing to the implementation of the VPoA and the SDGs.

Mr. Roel Janssens, the representative of UNECE informed the meeting that UNECE is currently responsible for the development of several transport infrastructure Master Plans, including the Trans-European Motorways (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) masterplans; and the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) project. He noted that Phase III of the EATL project is concluded, and the [report](#) has been finalized and is available on the UNECE website. He informed that there are, a number, of tangible benefits from the work done in preparation of the report, particularly relevant to the LLDCs and transit countries among EATL members. Inter alia, the report identifies main commodity groups for which inland modes of transport can compete with maritime and aviation modes; provides comparative analysis showing the economic advantage of inland routes for containerized cargo; and suggests a number of recommendations to make inland routes more competitive vis a vis the other modes. He noted that concluding the EATL Phase III project, an international conference will be organised, in Geneva, in September 2018, in the framework of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), focusing on the operationalisation of the EATL. In addition, the EATL Phase III report will be officially published in English and Russian later this year.

On infrastructure development, Mr. Janssens explained that under the auspices of UNECE, with the support of the Islamic Development Bank, an [International Transport Infrastructure Observatory](#) is being developed, which will be an electronic space, designed to retrieve and analyse data on transport networks and modes, existing transport corridors, new transport infrastructure projects, traffic flows and results from regional studies. He noted that the observatory will enhance coordination among the various regional initiatives in the region and that the launch is initially scheduled for September, with plans to extend the project towards Mediterranean region.

In addition, UNECE is administering a total of 58 UN transport related conventions, and border crossing facilitation is at heart of the Inland Transport Committee. He noted that the TIR accession of Qatar, India, China and Pakistan and the operationalization of TIR system in UAE, presents transit opportunities for the LLDCs. Mr. Janssens also informed that the development of the unified railway law is ongoing and draft legal provisions are being tested in real life along the corridor Germany – Poland - Belarus - Russian Federation. With regards to the CMR convention, the move towards e-CMR allows instant exchange of information on transported goods and reduces the environmental impact of global trade by increasing efficiency, using less paper and minimising archival requirements.

Mr. Jens Hügel, the representative of IRU, highlighted that the TIR is the key in implementation of the fundamental principles of the VPoA, noting that 80% of the TFA can be solved by implementing the TIR. He informed that there has been good progress in geographical expansion of the TIR system, with accessions of china, India and Pakistan providing good incentive for neighbouring countries, including LLDCs. He noted that Qatar, Oman and Saudi Arabia are also close to joining the TIR, which is likely to provide incentive for countries in Africa. He noted that intermodal and digital transport are being

demanded by countries, as they are key to connecting with international markets. He explained that IRU is providing countries assistance in the implementation of the TIR and is working closely with ECE and ORHLLS. Mr. Hgel informed the meeting that the World Congress of the IRU is taking place on 6-9 November 2018. He also pledged IRU's support in the organization of the midterm review of the VPoA.

In follow-up discussion on how the TIR ties into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), IRU representative responded that TIR is fundamental pillar of the BRI for China while there is now also more pressure on countries to use TIR. The representative of ECE will follow up on the question from WTO representative on whether the unified railway regime is also supported by the BRI.

Mr. Frank Van Rompaey, the representative of UNIDO, explained that UNIDO's support to LLDCs is centred on structural economic transformation and diversification, with the goal of generating strong industrial sector. He noted that improving manufacturing capacities of LLDCs and industrial development is central for socio-economic development. He informed that UNIDO has a central to play in providing technical cooperation and assistance to LLDCs for improving their competitiveness and hence increase their integration in the international market, through regional and global value chains development, trade capacity building, investment promotion, renewable energy, energy efficiency and eco-industrial parks.

He further noted that UNIDO has stand-alone technical assistance and capacity building programmes in 11 LLDCs, as well as in terms of global programmes. He explained that UNIDO is piloting a new model of country-level engagement (PCP) for achieving SDG 9 and accelerating industrialization, which is key in light of de-industrialization trends in LLDCs, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa. He highlighted that PCP is based on multi-stakeholder partnerships to facilitate greater impact, is led by the host government, and UNIDO plays facilitating and convening roles, in addition to providing technical assistance. He further informed that PCPs are focused on leveraging private investment in priority industrial sectors, with industrial parks and special economic zones as central feature of this approach. Mr. Van Rompaey noted that the programme is currently piloted in 5 countries, including in Ethiopia (3 years ongoing) and Kyrgyzstan (just started). He expressed concern that the demand for PCPs is above UNIDO's current capacity and invited UN agencies to join and support countries in achieving inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, especially in light if faltering UN support for SDG 9.

Mr. Ferran Prez Rib, the representative of the World Bank, gave an overview of World Bank's support in the priority areas of the VPoA. On Priority 1, he explained that the World Bank is working with governments of 30 LLDCs to support bilateral and regional transit arrangements, border cooperation and joint approaches to standards in order to reduce transaction costs. On Priority 2, he noted that 34 of 48 ongoing Transport & ICT projects include maintenance, rehabilitation, upgrading or new construction, and also promote development of necessary broadband infrastructure and national broadband policies. On priority 3, he informed that World Bank support is focused on activities aimed at improving transport corridors and simplifying, streamlining and harmonizing border procedures which lead to reducing travel time along corridors. On priority 4 World Bank supports development corridors linking LLDCs and isolated regions to the global economy through roads, rail and broadband connections, and on Priority 5 support focuses on urban development, manufacturing and digital development. On Priority 6, World Bank focuses on how to provide financial and technical assistance to LLDCs through low-interest loans, credits and grants. He also emphasized that World Bank is using new approach to maximizing finance for development to see how best leverage public and private sources of finance and use ODA to bring in other sources of investment.

Mr. Pérez then gave more insight into the transport and digital development portfolio, through which the World Bank is supporting 30 LLDCs with lending and advisory services. He noted that the largest beneficiary is Kazakhstan, followed by Ethiopia, Azerbaijan and Bolivia. He highlighted that there are 48 ongoing projects in 24 LLDCs, with \$10.8 billion in WB financing, with almost \$9 million for national projects and the rest for regional projects. He also noted that for 2018-19, World Bank is launching \$1.6 billion in new projects in 14 LLDCs, including for the first time in Burundi, Lesotho and Niger. He also explained that new advisory services will be launched in Chad, South Sudan and Bhutan.

Mr. Orhan Osmani, the representative of ITU, updated the meeting in ITU activities. He agreed with previous interventions that there are many people who are not connected to the Internet, and added that satellite and broadband service prices are likely to drop in coming years, which may ease the efforts put to connect those that do not have access to fibre optic networks in difficult terrains and rural areas. He highlighted that LLDCs and transit countries could work together to help connect to Internet those remaining unconnected. He explained that ITU has concrete projects in countries and are mandated by their resolutions coming from major conferences to support LLDCs.

He emphasized ITU's pilot Broadband infrastructure projects in Burundi, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Mali, Swaziland, and Rwanda where progress has been promising, thanks to the Government being involved. He explained that ITU is also helping countries to reduce the risks and prepare better to deal with disasters, noting an early warning systems project in Zambia. He also highlighted projects to reduce digital divide, including in Kyrgyzstan for example. He also noted ITU's projects on cyber security, where assessment on readiness on cyber security have been completed in number of countries. ITU is also working on creation of centres of excellence, with one finished in Rwanda, which will become a regional centre. He highlighted that ITU is finalizing report on Bolivia and Paraguay, which is soon to be released. In addition, Mr. Osmani mentioned that ITU has ongoing innovation and partnership projects, is pushing for girls in ICT, empowering young entrepreneurs, as well as working closely with private sector members and academia. Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, OHRLLS also recalled that ITU and OHRLLS will collaborate in preparation of a report focused on LLDCs in 2020.

Mr. Gustavo Katz Braga, a representative of CFC, highlighted that LLDCs rely on limited products for their exports earnings, cannot add meaningful value to their products due to structural weaknesses and are especially vulnerable to commodity price volatility and that to overcome their challenges LDCs need to diversify their economy and add value to their products to enhance their participate in upper parts of value chains. He explained that by investing in SMEs, CFC empowers primary producers, giving them the tools and resources to scale up on the value chain.

He informed that during 2014-2016, the CFC has approved 5 regular projects and 4 smaller projects focused in LLDCs, with total value of \$20.5 million of which about \$6.6 million is contributed by the CFC. The projects cover commodities such as soybeans, coffee, bamboo, grains, etc. and aim to develop new opportunities for small producers to enhance production, productivity, value addition, access to markets, capacity building and risk management. Mr. Braga further indicated that in 2017 CFC considered 47 proposals from LLDCs, with 3 taken for further consideration for CFC financing, with the total amount of \$13.2 million. He noted that CFC also supported impact investment funds with activities in LLDCs, to help strengthen the impact investment industry, attracting more capital for the LLDCs. He concluded by saying that LLDCs need to encourage investment in productive sectors, taking advantage of their commodity endowment and support diversification. He urged the meeting to reflect on the need for a global commodity agenda for development, which could have a great impact on LLDCs.

Mr. Hugo Beteta, the representative of UN ECLAC, highlighted that exports of the LLDCs in Latin America are heavily concentrated in little value-added commodities; in Bolivia, oil and gas represent major exports, while soy and energy exports from Paraguay are principally targeting nearby markets. He stressed that neighbours matter a lot, with neighbouring countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Peru being the main markets for these products. He emphasized that structural transformation in these countries is not moving in the right direction, with many sectors that looked promising in manufacturing and innovation having their capital re-directed to natural resources sectors. He noted that this trend is difficult to reverse and also creates fiscal risks.

He informed the meeting that ECLAC carried out a study that suggests that more than 20% of cost of exporting soy in Paraguay are due to internal logistical inefficiencies. ECLAC is assisting the LLDCs to address these internal problems and supported Bolivia in development of logistics strategy for 2025 and Paraguay in development of national logistical plan for 2030. He highlighted that ECLAC is also actively promoting integration in regional value chains, focusing on private-public dialogues to find the bottlenecks to the whole chain; targeting MSMEs and women who are systematically finding it difficult to access credit; and assists with industrial policy development. Mr. Beteta informed that ECLAC is continuing to monitor the VPoA in the region and is coming up with framework to link VPoA with the SDGs.

Ms. Nara Luvsan, the representative of UNEP, updated the participants on UNEP's recent work by their "Environment and Trade" hub and on SIDS within the SAMOA Pathway. She informed the participants about UNEP's involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is preparations for an International Coalition for Green and Sustainable Development along the B&R countries. She highlighted that UNEP together with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment from China are planning to launch this Coalition later this year (October/November 2018). In this regard and especially for LLDCs, she noted that UNEP is calling for a balanced approach taking into account inclusiveness, sustainability, greening and environmental impact. She noted the eagerness of China to share their lessons learned, but expressed concern over the fast pace of developments. She called for assistance from the present organizations in support of the preparation for the launch event, noting that a letter will be sent shortly to join the coalition.

Mr. Jason Gagnon, the representative of OECD, presented the OECD Development Centre's initiatives on LDCs and LLDCs. He mentioned that during their high-level meeting last October, an initiative on Development in Transition was launched as a platform to discuss development disparities that still exist among countries and the implications of development transition. He noted that this initiative will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the development process itself, through use of multi-dimensional indicators, including the OECD's multi-dimensional country reviews. He explained this platform will be opened to OECD members and non-members with view to allow them to better design policies to maintain, further and sustain development gains. The contribution of this platform is also to pursue innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially within the South. On this point, he noted that OECD held with UNOSSC in February 2018 a Technical Brainstorming Meeting on South-South Co-operation in a New Development Context, bringing together think tanks and research centres from the South. He explained that this platform is now moving towards policy making.

He highlighted other ongoing initiatives relevant for LLDCs, including productive transformation policy reports, which look at structural transformation in countries, focusing mainly on MICs, but may increasingly be focused also on LDCs and LLDCs, with specific attention to innovation and digitalization. He also informed that thematic work is being undertaken on youth, gender, social protection, natural

resources, education and migration in LDCs and LLDCs, including Uganda, Rwanda, Nepal, Malawi, Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Armenia.

Ms. Rachel Dignam, the representative of ICC, explained that ICC represents over 6 million companies of all sizes from more than 100 countries. She explained that trade facilitation has long been on ICC's agenda. She highlighted that ICC is now in a mapping phase working with national committees and various chambers of commerce, with more information on this coming in May. She mentioned that ICC is collaborating with OHRLLS and other partners towards organizing a side event during the Financing for Development Forum focused on SMEs. She also noted that LLDCs are increasing becoming a priority for ICC and they remain committed to rally up the private sector in the implementation of the VPoA, including the midterm review, as well as for implementation of the SDGs, Sendai framework and TFA.

Ms. Monica Ferro, the representative of UNFPA, highlighted that UNFPA continues to engage in LLDCs which still have an opportunity to harness the demographic dividend, and working with them to meet their needs related to family planning, gender-based violence and access to sexual and reproductive health services by young people, in particular in Africa. She indicated that UNFPA's support to LLDCs includes contributing to the use of demographic data to integrate population projections into development planning and update of national policies and development plan.

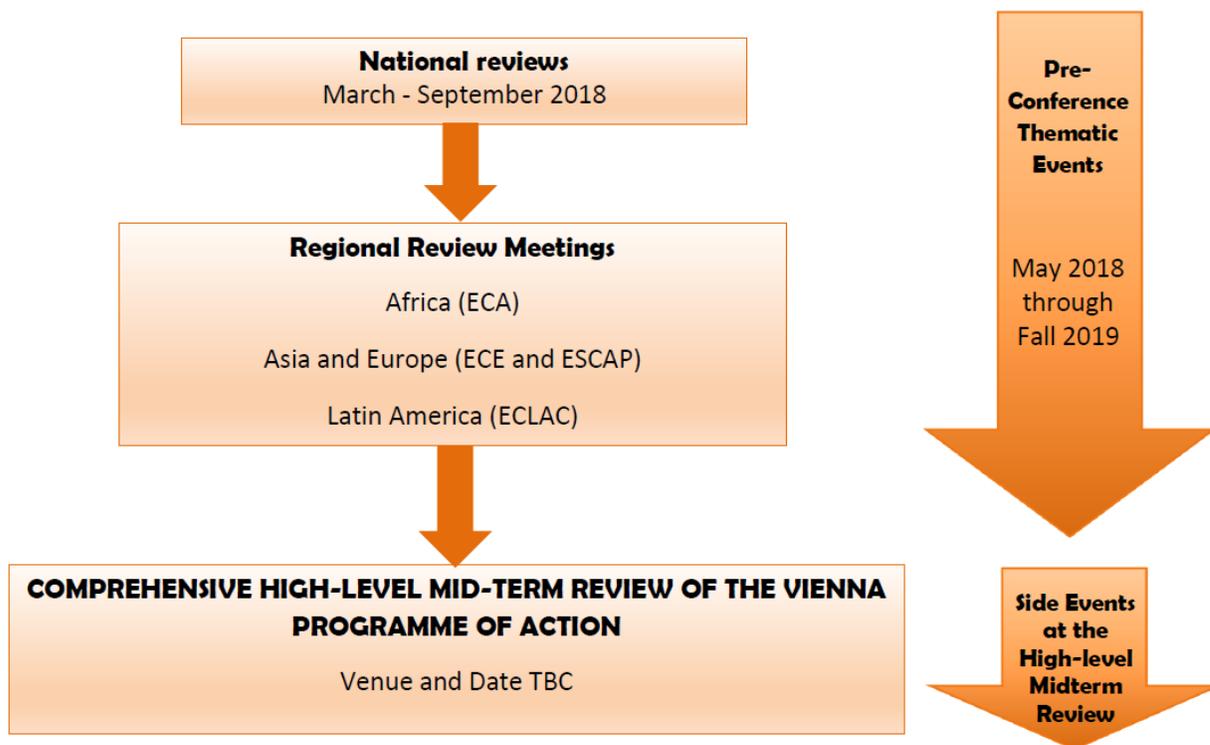
She noted that UNFPA also supports strengthening of national statistical systems to monitor the implementation of SDGs and other key development outcomes as reflected in the Vienna Programme of Action. This includes assisting LLDCs with data collection in relation to the 2020 census round. In addition, she stressed that some LLDCs in Central Asia and Europe have also requested assistance with respect to the Gender Generational Survey. She also indicated that UNFPA looks forward to engaging further with OHRLLS and other partners in relation to the midterm review of the VPoA.

D. Consultations on the preparations for the midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS informed the meeting about the preparations for the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA which was decided by the General Assembly to be held no later than December 2019. He noted that the aim is to review the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA; share best practices; identify obstacles and actions to accelerate implementation of the VPoA. The review will adopt an intergovernmentally negotiated political declaration. He explained that detailed modalities of the midterm review, such as location of the conference, duration and participation will be considered separately by the General Assembly later this year. In terms of the venue, he noted that the options include New York and Vienna but some other countries, such as transit countries, have shown preliminary interest.

In terms of the preparations, he highlighted that OHRLLS is the focal point for the preparation and organization of the midterm review and that all other organizations, including regional commissions are invited to support and contribute to the preparatory process. He then gave an overview of the national, regional and global preparations: 1) At national level, requests were sent to LLDCs to prepare national reports on the implementation of the VPoA by September 2018. 2) At the regional level, three regional preparatory meetings, in Africa, Euro-Asia and Latin America, will take place likely in the first half of 2019, with the regional commissions expected to play a leading role. 3) At the global level, thematic pre-

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION



conference events will be held. He stressed that it is important for organizations to play a key role in the preparations, either through (co-)organizing thematic pre-conference events or substantive reports. He said that preliminary list of pre-conference events has been circulated (Annex III) and urged representatives to inform OHRLLS of their organization’s intentions to organize thematic events or prepare reports. He informed that the preparations will be launched with the Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on Trade and Transport in Astana on 16-17 May and expressed hope that the heads of organizations will attend and participate in the meeting. Mr. Erdenebileg also noted that limited number of side events will be organized during the midterm review itself, and asked organizations to seek collaborations and send their suggestions for side events to OHRLLS.

Mr. Erdenebileg concluded by emphasizing that the USG and High Representative will soon be writing to the Principles of the organizations to solicit their suggestions for the pre-conference and side events.

E. Conclusion and way forward

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, UN-OHRLLS concluded the meeting by thanking the representatives of the organizations for their support and dedication to the LLDCs. She was impressed with the work ongoing to implement the Vienna Programme of Action. She summarized the intervention of the Chair of the LLDCs and Coordinator on Trade in Geneva who gave an overview of the priorities of the Group and their

ambitions. She stressed that we need to make sure that the implementation of VPoA is done in coherence with the SDGs and other global agendas, which remains one of the key priorities of OHRLLS. She said that UN-OHRLLS looks forward to joint collaborations in the lead up to the midterm review of the VPoA and encouraged the organizations to indicate to OHRLLS by email which thematic pre-conference events they would like to organize or co-organize, as well as to inform OHRLLS of planned substantive thematic reports. She also highlighted the need to undertake joint resource mobilization efforts. She concluded by expressing thanks to the participants and hope for continued partnerships.

Annex I: List of Participants

Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)

Mr. Gustavo Katz Braga, Impact Strategy Officer, email: gustavo.katzbraga@common-fund.org

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Ms. Rachel Dignam, Customs and trade facilitation policy focal point, email: Rachel.DIGNAM@iccwbo.org

International Trade Center (ITC)

Mr. Francesco Geoffroy, Senior Project Design Officer, Division of Country Programmes, Email: geoffroy@intracen.org

International telecommunications Union (ITU)

Mr. Orhan Osmani, Emergency Telecommunications Officer, LDCs, SIDS and Emergency Telecommunications Division, email: Orhan.osmani@itu.int

International Road Transport Union (IRU)

Mr. Jens Hügel, Senior Adviser, email: jens.huegel@iru.org

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Mr. Jason Gagnon, Development Centre, email: Jason.GAGNON@oecd.org

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Poul Damgaard Hansen, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Facilitation Section, email: Poul.Hansen@unctad.org

Mr. Moritz Meier-Ewert, Economic Affairs Officer, LLDC Section, Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes, email: Moritz.Meier-Ewert@unctad.org

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE)

Mr. Roel Janssens, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable transport Division, email: roel.janssens@un.org

UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC)

Mr. Hugo Beteta, Chief, Subregional HQ in Mexico, email: Hugo.beteta@cepal.org

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Ms. Nara Luvsan, Senior Regional Adviser, UN Environment Europe Office, email: nara.luvsan@unep.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Ms. Clare Stark, Strategic Planning Specialist, Section for Cooperation with UN system/Bureau for Strategic Planning, Email: c.stark@unesco.org

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Mr. Paul Desanker, Manager, Adaptation Programme, email: pdesanker@unfccc.int

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Ms. Monica Ferro, Director, UNFPA Geneva Office, Email: ferro@unfpa.org

United National Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. Frank Van Rompaey, Representative to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva, Email: F.VANROMPAEY@unido.org

UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)

Ms. Linnéa Van Wagenen, Special Assistant to the Secretary-General's Envoy on South-South Cooperation, Email: linnea.vanwagenen@undp.org

World Bank

Mr. Ferran Pérez Ribó, International Affairs Officer, Email: fperezribo@worldbank.org

World Customs Organization (WCO)

Ms. Hong Nguyen, Technical Officer, Compliance and Facilitation Directorate, Email: hong.nguyen@wcoomd.org

World Food Programme (WFP)

Ms. Marie-Helene Kyprianou, email: m-helene.kyprianou@wfp.org

World Health organization (WHO)

Mr. Wasiq Khan, Public Health, Country Cooperation & Collaboration with UN System, Email: khanwa@who.int

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Mr. Purevdorj Vaanchig, Senior Counsellor, Division for LDCs, email: purevdorj.vaanchig@wipo.int
Ms. Alexandra Bhattacharya, Consultant, Division for LDCs, email: alexandra.bhattacharya@wipo.int

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Mr. Raul Torres, Counsellor, Development Division, Email: raul.torres@wto.org

UN-OHRLS Secretariat

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, Email: schroderus-fox@un.org
Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Email: erdenebileg@un.org
Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, Senior Programme Officer, Email: mutangadura@un.org
Mr. Aniket Ghai, Senior Programme Officer, Email: ghai1@un.org
Ms. Dagmar Hertova, Programme Officer, Email: hertova@un.org

Annex II: Agenda

Sixth Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Follow-up and Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

11 April 2018

Conference Room S-4, Palais des Nations, Geneva

10:00 – 10:30	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening remarks by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS• Remarks by LLDC Group Global Chair and Coordinator on Trade and Development in Geneva
10:30 – 13:00	Update on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the LLDCs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS: <u>Moderator</u> and briefing on the UN GA resolution A/72/232 on Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries• UN-OHRLLS remarks on the activities undertaken since last IACG• Presentations by participating organizations on their activities towards implementation of the VPoA and building coherence with the 2030 Agenda
13:00 – 15:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
15:00 – 17:00	Consultations on the preparations for the midterm review of the implementation of the VPoA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS: <u>Moderator</u> and presentation on the status of the preparations for the midterm review and way forward• Contributions/Comments by participating organizations on preparations for the regional review meetings, thematic pre-conference events and side events to be held before and during the midterm review and other planned substantive activities or events
17:00 – 17:30	Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of discussion and concluding remarks by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS

