Outcome document

Africa Regional Midterm Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action For Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024

18-19 March 2019, Marrakesh, Morocco

Introduction
United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) organized the Africa Regional Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action For Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) on 18 and 19 March 2019 in Marrakesh, Morocco. The meeting was organized on the margins of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which adopted a resolution to further the outcomes of the midterm review meeting.

The meeting was attended by senior government policymakers and other stakeholders from African LLDCs, transit countries, development partners as well as participants from the UN system, relevant international and regional organizations, civil society representatives and the private sector.

The meeting assessed progress achieved in the implementation of the VPoA along the six priority areas, based on national reports, a substantive regional report, and through presentations from participating LLDCs and transit countries, work undertaken by UN-OHRLLS and UNECA and other international and regional organizations as well as discussions during the meeting.

The meeting agreed on the following assessment and recommendations for each of the VPoA priority areas.

Priority Area 1: Fundamental Transit Policy issues
The African landlocked and transit countries have made progress in ratifying important international and regional agreements that support improved transit even though implementation is still low. Over the review period, 13 of the 14 LLDCs WTO Members and 13 transit countries have ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. There were not many LLDCs and transit countries that became party to some of the main transport and trade facilitation related international agreements. Only 1 LLDC and 3 transit countries ratified the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention over the review period.

The continent reached a new milestone in 2018 when African Union member States signed the agreement on the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). In addition 30 countries have signed the Protocol on free movement of persons, right residence and right of establishment. The agreement includes provisions on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation that will be of particular benefit to landlocked developing countries. To date, there are twenty ratifications, falling short of only two for the agreement to come into force.
There has been noticeable growth in regional initiatives aimed at easing movement of goods and people across borders. In 2015, the Agreement for the Establishment of a Tripartite Free Trade Area of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, EAC and SADC, strengthened the resolve of the twenty-six Tripartite States towards the implementation of various trade facilitation measures. The Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme, was launched in October 2017.

Other initiatives include: the decision adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union in 2015 which calls on countries to introduce a 30-day visa on arrival for all citizens of African countries; the African passport, visa-free regional blocs, or multi-year visas, aimed at facilitating free movement of persons, goods and services around the continent.

The Move Africa Initiative of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) was launched in 2016 particularly to address challenges pertaining to trans-boundary trade and logistical challenges. Furthermore, the Traffic Light System was developed to monitor and evaluate the performance of transport and trade corridors and aims at improving transport corridors and it is still at pilot stage.

**Recommendations**

- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to cooperate and coordinate on fundamental transit policies, laws and regulations and towards enhancing freedom of transit and integrate the international and regional standards in national legislation.
- International organizations are encouraged to scale up technical assistance and capacity building support towards the effective accession, ratification and implementation of relevant regional and international conventions agreements.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to effectively implement the WTO TFA and other relevant international and regional agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to use available tools to promote transit such as the WCO Transit Guidelines and other mechanisms to monitor travel time along transit transport corridors like the WCO Time Release Studies is encouraged.
- LLDCs and transit countries should make more efforts to meet the VPoA specific objectives of reducing travel time along the corridors; reducing cargo dwell times at seaports and reduce time spent at the land borders. LLDCs and transit countries with support of the RECs, corridor organizations, UN and other international organizations, as well as development partners should regularly collect the relevant data needed to monitor the specific objectives.

**Priority Area 2: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance.**

It is estimated that more than 90% of traffic in the region is by road. Progress is being made regarding infrastructure expansion and upgrading in African countries including in LLDCs, but a lot remains to be done to meet the needed levels. The Trans African Highway (TAH) has a total length of 54,120 km distributed along nine corridors. The TAH is currently characterized by missing links and poor maintenance in some key segments. The percentage of paved roads is still low in Africa it was estimated to be about 13% in 2015 if the North African countries are excluded. African LLDCs lag behind both transit developing countries and the global average in terms of both road and rail densities.
Most countries have established dedicated Road Funds and Road Authorities/Development Agencies to undertake maintenance, and development of roads for both the regional and national road networks. The main source of funds for road maintenance has been the fuel levy, access and toll gate fees, depending on the country, while funding for new construction and rehabilitation has been through government capital budget allocations, borrowing from development banks and funds from cooperating partners provided either as loans or grants. Road maintenance has also been performed by the private sector, for example, South Africa, Botswana and Zambia have adopted this option through open public tender process.

The continent has continued to develop new railway infrastructure projects as well as upgrade existing links. Southern Africa has seen the rehabilitation of the railways in Angola anchored on the ports of Namibe, Lobito and Luanda, as well as railways in Mozambique, anchored on the ports of Beira (Sena Line) and Nacala linking them directly with landlocked states of Zimbabwe and Malawi. Another example from the East African region is the Ethiopia – Djibouti railway line which provides landlocked Ethiopia with access to the sea at the port of Doraleh. However African LLDCs noted with concern the slower progress in rail infrastructure development in Central Africa.

Air carrier departures from the African LLDCs, increased by 15.6 percent between 2014 and 2017. The challenges faced by LLDCs’ air transport industry include high scale of investment that is needed for infrastructure development and maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement of aged fleet, and upgrading of airports and terminals, lack of physical and human resources and new technologies and limited connectivity. It is however encouraging to note that a number of African countries have either built up new airports to replace the old ones or have rehabilitated several of their airports. In addition, the African Union launched the Single African Air Transport Market in January 2018 that promotes full liberalisation of market access to intra-African air transport services.

To facilitate trade along the corridors, PIDA has recommended that all Africa’s transport corridors should be converted to SMART corridors to improve the corridor efficiency and reduce transport costs.

**Recommendations on transport infrastructure**

- LLDCs and transit countries, with the support of their development and trade partners, need to scale up their capacity for expansion and maintenance of transport (road and rail) infrastructure.
- LLDCs and transit countries, should in a coordinated manner, develop and/or upgrade international and transboundary transport and transit corridors encompassing all modes of transportation to address the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries.
- The regional financial institutions, UN system and other development partners should strengthen their technical assistance programs for improving the institutional capacities of the LLDCs to formulate and implement bankable infrastructure development projects more effectively and efficiently.
• LLDCs should integrate the development and maintenance of transboundary transport infrastructure in their national development strategies and should not be stand-alone initiatives. LLDCs need to pay particular attention to the cost recovery mechanisms and insurance schemes in negotiating Public Private Partnership Agreements.

• LLDCs and their development partners including the regional and international financial institutions, regional organizations and bilateral development agencies should strengthen their efforts to mobilize and allocate more resources for infrastructure development and maintenance.

• LLDCs need to strengthen their efforts in mobilizing domestic resources and bring about necessary tax administration reforms to meet their growing infrastructure financing needs.

• The LLDCs and transit countries need to accelerate domestication and implementation of sound regionally adopted policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks to create an enabling environment for investment and infrastructure operations as well as enhance global competitiveness.

• Development partners and relevant international organizations as well as the private sector are encouraged to provide support to facilitate the implementation of the SMART corridors initiative. The support may include development of bankable projects.

• Development partners, international financial institutions, international and regional organizations are called upon to support LLDCs and transit countries to develop climate change resilient transport infrastructure.

Energy
In 2016, 27.6% of people living in the African LLDCs had access to electricity, a percentage point increase of 3.3 from the 2014 level. However, the African LLDCs still lag behind both in the overall and the world averages in this respect. There is, moreover, a significant rural-urban electricity divide in the African LLDCs. On average in 2016, 61.6% of urban-dwellers had electricity access, as compared to only 13.5% of those in rural areas. On the use of clean fuels and technologies for cooking, only 13.7% of the population in the African LLDCs had access to clean fuels and technologies in 2016. More efforts are required to improve access to sustainable energy in LLDCs.

In order to enhance Africa’s generation capacity, a number of national power generation and cross border interconnector plans have been adopted, with most of the key projects adopted as part of the master plans for the RECs (namely COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS and SADC) as regional projects, under the auspices of PIDA, the African Development Bank and other partners. On the generation front, the Gibe III Project in Ethiopia is an example achieved during the period under review. In order to augment power capacity in Africa, a number of renewable energy projects have been developed in almost all countries, including LLDCs. Owing to long gestation periods of power projects, the pace of completion of these projects has been very slow.

Recommendations on energy
• LLDCs and transit countries need to accelerate preparation of power projects (including renewables) and scale up projects on cross border inter-connectors to enable LLDCs experiencing power shortfalls to purchase power from neighboring countries and regional power pools to ensure energy security. The international community is called upon to provide technical and financial support to these efforts.
• LLDCs that are endowed with energy including hydroelectricity are encouraged to use electricity in transforming their productive capacities and boosting their exports of manufacturing products.

• LLDCs should strive to improve transformational energy access that goes beyond meeting basic household needs but includes electricity for productive use that can transform the economies of LLDCs including through renewable energy mini grids, off grids and in this regard development partners, UN and other international and regional organizations are called upon to support the LLDCs.

• LLDCs and transit states should support expansion and upgrading of supply, transmission and distribution infrastructure and increase investments in improving energy efficiency.

• Encourage private sector participation in the development of country’s energy sector, in a manner that promotes use of energy in productive sectors.

• LLDCs need to intensify the implementation of Rural Electrification Programmes to promote Universal Access to electricity. These are funded through state fiscal mechanisms and by international and regional development aid.

• Initiatives such as the Light and Power Africa should be supported and scaled up.

• The international community is called upon to provide technical assistance and capacity building support to strengthen the capacity of LLDCs to develop bankable project proposals in order for them to take full advantage of climate funding for energy projects.

Information and communications technology (ICT)
African LLDCs have witnessed an absolute increase in mobile cellular subscriptions, from 64.3 per 100 people in 2014 to 66.3 per 100 people in 2017. The average number of internet users in this group of countries has also been rising, from 12 to 18.6 per 100 people in the 2014-2017 period. The African LLDCs noted with concern that these averages are very low as compared to both the general LLDCs and world averages.

One of the main reasons for low usage of the internet in the African LLDCs is the high cost of ICT access. Both mobile cellular and fixed broadband prices are highest in the African LLDCs. High ICT prices make it difficult for African LLDCs to harness the benefits of the digital economy and the optimisation of emerging technologies that facilitate trade and spur sustainable development.

Recommendations on ICT
• LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to collaborate to establish ICT infrastructure, applications and services with the support of governments, private sector, development partners, multilateral financial and development institutions and regional banks.

• LLDCs are encouraged to create appropriate enabling environment including the necessary policies, legal and regulatory framework to support ICT development in particular the development of broadband including enhancement of digital skills, promotion of digital inclusion, increased adoption and utilization of ICT applications and services and to close the digital divide.
• LLDCs are encouraged to provide for mechanisms to facilitate the deployment of networks and services in non-profitable areas for operators, whether public investment, public-private scheme, or other types of incentive.
• LLDCs should work with cellular service providers with the view to reduce the cost of broadband access.
• The international community should provide capacity-building support to LLDCs improve their business environment in order to attract and retain the private sector in the ICT sector especially in the areas of the use of ICT infrastructure to promote trade, improve trade logistics, and enhance productivity and structural economic transformation.
• The international community is called upon to facilitate technology transfer and support science and innovation towards implementation of the VPoA and the SDGs in LLDCs. The international

Priority 3: International trade and trade facilitation

International Trade

The merchandise trade for African LLDCs on average increased over the review period. In 2017, African LLDCs’ exports amounted to US$ 37.3 billion compared to US$ 34.7 billion in 2016. This pick up in trade reflects the improved global trade performance. In terms of imports, 2017 saw African LLDCs imports increase to USD 61.4 billion from USD 59.8 billion in 2016. The African LLDC trade balance remained relatively stable at USD 24.2 billion deficit.

African LLDCs note with concern their low share of trade since the adoption of the VPoA. For example, in 2017, LLDCs global share of exports was 0.21 per cent a slight decrease from 2015 and the share of intra-African trade for African LLDCs was 29 per cent, compared to the continental average of 18 per cent. In 2017, trade as a percentage of GDP for the LLDCs was on average 63%.

It is important to note that Africa’s exports to the rest of the world are mainly natural resources (fuel oil and minerals) and low-value added primary commodities- which are vulnerable to price volatility. The LLDCs are by far importing more than they are exporting and therefore suffer from huge trade deficits and this further render them even more vulnerable. The exportation of the raw materials by these states deprive them of the benefits of beneficiation and value addition.

The AfCFTA commits countries to remove tariffs on 90 percent of goods, progressively liberalize trade in services, and address a host of other non-tariff barrier. If successfully implemented, the agreement will create a single African market of over a billion consumers with a total GDP of over $3 trillion. The AfCFTA offers the opportunity for the LLDCs to expand their trade.

African LLDCs are concerned with the current threats to the Multilateral Trading System including the stalemate in the Doha Development Agenda negotiations and the increase in the adoption of protectionist measures by major trading partners. This situation can further marginalize the LLDCs from the global trade.
**Recommendations**

- African LLDCs are encouraged to ratify the AfCFTA and accede to the WTO in this regard the UN system and other international and regional organizations should provide technical assistance and capacity-building support.
- LLDCs should formulate and implement policies and strategies aimed at diversifying their export base and adding value to their exports in order to expand their participation in regional and global value chains.
- The international community is called upon to support LLDCs in diversifying their exports, including through transfer of relevant technologies and support in developing their productive capacities.
- LLDCs need to enhance efforts aimed at improving their business environment.
- LLDCs should address barriers to trade in services.
- WTO Members are called upon to strengthen and preserve the multilateral trade system and the negotiating function of the WTO, and to resist all forms of protectionism to promote common prosperity.

**Trade Facilitation**

Trade facilitation plays a crucial role in improving the trade competitiveness of the LLDCs and reducing the high trade costs and boosting their exports. Progress is being made by LLDCs and their transit neighbours in implementing trade facilitation reforms with support from development partners. The performance of the African LLDCs in trade facilitation however remains low as depicted by the OECD trade facilitation indicator.

The World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) contains provisions for expedited movements, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit and it has the potential to reduce costs by between 12.5 and 17.5 per cent. African LLDCs and transit countries have made great progress in ratifying the TFA. The implementation of the TFA by these countries however remains low. According to the WTO TFA Facility database, in 2018 Africa LLDCs had notified 28% of the measure as category A¹ measures compared overall 58.1% for all developing countries.

According to the United Nations Regional Commissions 2017 Global Survey on Paperless Trade and Trade Facilitation, the implementation rate of cross-border paperless trade for African LLDCs was around 51%, relative to a global average of 60%. Regionally, according to the survey, trade facilitation measures relating to formalities tend to be more implemented (on average 64 per cent). On the other hand, costly cross-border paperless trade measures are less implemented, at 22 per cent. The results for the LLDCs largely reflect the regional pattern. Most African LLDCs reported a relatively high implementation rate for transparency measures, with most having an implementation rate above the regional average. These include promotion of cross-border paperless trade, adoption of e-based transit and transport facilitation tools single-stop inspections, single windows for documentation, electronic payment and transparency and modernization of border posts and customs services.

¹ Measures already being implemented
Some progress has been made in establishing or strengthening national committees on trade facilitation. According to UNCTAD map of Trade Facilitation Committees, 14 out of the 16 Africa LLDCs have established national trade facilitation committees. Progress has also been made in adopting ICT solutions for streamlining customs clearance procedures and formalities, reducing the number of documents, and improving vehicle movements speedily and less expensively. Some LLDCs have adopted the Single Window facilitation tools and/or Automated System of Customs Data (ASYCUDA) which have improved customs clearance and procedures.

Furthermore progress has been made in establishing one stop border posts to improve border transit facilities and streamline border crossing procedures and formalities. However there has been limited support on both soft and hard infrastructure development.

**Recommendations**

- The UN and other international and regional organizations and the development partners are encouraged to provide the necessary technical, financial and capacity-building assistance to LLDCs and transit countries to ensure the effective implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.
- LLDCs and Transit countries should mainstream trade facilitation into their national development strategies and plans and for those LLDCs that have not done so, they should establish national committee on trade facilitation.
- LLDCs need to enhance their efforts in improving and harmonizing their customs administrations and streamlining border crossing procedures, including by reducing the number of documentations needed for export and import.
- LLDCs should promote greater use of technology-driven and ICT solutions to trade facilitation, including introduction of paperless trade, automation of customs procedures and customs clearance systems, and implementation of single window environment and OSBPs and development partners are called upon to support these efforts.
- LLDCs and transit countries should fully utilize the trade facilitation tools developed by international organizations. Neighboring transit countries should enhance their involvement relating to facilitation measures.
- Adequate resources need to be provided to support implementation of Trade and Transport Facilitation Programs at regional and sub-regional levels, including through Aid for Trade.
- LLDCs and transit countries need to enhance transparency by creating online platforms where all the information relating to trade is readily available for searching and viewing.

**Priority Area 4: Regional Integration and cooperation**

With the implementation of AfCFTA, it is expected that intra-African trade will continue to grow among African countries as regional integration continues to serve as a useful vehicle for reducing some of trade barriers, paving the way for creating a conducive environment for private sector to operate. Regional integration is also key in attracting more Foreign Direct Investments in the many African countries. For the LLDCs, regional coordination plays an integral role in efforts to achieve economies of scale for infrastructure investments across borders, and to reduce transit costs through harmonized and consolidated transit procedures. The AfCFTA should build on and improve upon the progress that has been made in trade liberalization and integration by the RECs.
It is foreseen that the implementation of the AfCFTA would result in the reduction of tariffs and elimination of non-tariff barriers since the agreement contains provisions for the benefit of LLDCs, such as those on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation. In addition, it can facilitate their integration into regional value chains as well as expand their trade capabilities. 13 LLDCs signed the consolidated AfCFTA agreement and 11 signed the protocol for free movement of persons.

**Recommendations**

- LLDCs should endeavor to ratify the AfCFTA without delay and lobby coastal transit states to ratify the AfCFTA which would address the inherent non-tariff and tariff barriers to intra-Africa trade.
- Regional and international development partners, UN organizations and other international organizations are encouraged to support the LLDCs and transit countries with technical, financial and capacity building support to advance their regional integration efforts.
- LLDCs and transit countries should make use of the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided by relevant international organizations towards the effective accession, ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions and regional cooperation agreements and frameworks.
- LLDCs and transit countries should also consider undertaking regional integration initiatives that encompass investment, research and development, industrial development and regional connectivity.

**Priority 5: Structural economic transformation**

Many LLDCs in Africa have seen a decline in the share of manufacturing in GDP and in employment, while the services sector has been the strongest driver of growth, rising from 45 per cent of value added in 2000 to 50 per cent in 2016. Manufacturing and agriculture have declined from 13 per cent and 28 per cent to 10 per cent to 26 per cent, respectively over the same period. After nearly two decades of decline in the share of manufacturing value added in GDP both in LLDCs countries and Africa as a whole, the trend changed in 2017, with Africa as a whole experiencing an increase while it declined further in LLDCs. This demonstrates the LLDCs’ limited capacity to produce and export manufactured goods. Greater efforts are required to promote value-addition, diversification and industrialization.

Several African LLDCs have been establishing industrial parks, export processing zones and special economic zones as key elements to spur productive capacities, structural transformation and export diversification. Such proactive and deliberate policies by national governments of LLDCs are critically important to promote entrepreneurship, technological adaptation and innovation, as well as efforts to foster agriculture and industrialization through carefully designed industrial policy. As part of the continentally and regionally facilitated programmes, a number of LLDCs have also identified some value chains in which they are and could participate in. Within the context of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite, the value chains identified in the agro-sector include maize; cassava; fish; hides, shoes and leather, as well as sugar.

LLDCs are experiencing the impact of climate change which is affecting agricultural productivity and is a major hindrance in achieving sustainable development. Studies show that LLDCs are the most vulnerable due to its geographical location and characteristics.
Recommendations

- LLDCs need to promote industrial policies that focus on fostering productive capacities and structural economic transformation supported by enabling macroeconomic, trade, financial, labour market, human resource and research and development policies.

- LLDCs should focus on enhancing their capacity in higher value-added products and high-productivity sectors, including through targeted incentives for sectors and/or firms and creating backward and forward linkages among manufacturing, agriculture and services sectors by linking small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the supply chains and production networks.

- LLDCs need to increase the stock of human and institutional capital, improve connectivity, enhance research, development and innovation capacity and strengthen institutional as well as governance capacities in order to participate at the higher end of global and regional value chains.

- LLDCs should improve the enabling regulatory environment for business which is crucial for developing a strong industrial base and attracting investment. Development partners should provide technical, financial and capacity-building assistance to support such efforts. There is also a need to incentivize the private sector, especially in sectors of comparative advantages, and improving access to low-cost finance for SMEs.

- LLDCs should take advantage of e-commerce opportunities.

- LLDCs and their development partners should accelerate the process of fostering productive capacities and structural economic transformation in LLDCs including through evidence-based policy making.

- Relevant United Nations agencies including but not limited to UNECA, UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD, UNIDO, International Trade Center, FAO, UNDP, IFAD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD are called upon to enhance their respective interventions in support of LLDCs in building their productive capacities, enhance export capabilities and foster structural economic transformation and in addressing climate change.

- LLDCs need to accelerate their efforts to produce and implement their National Adaptation Plans and to identify and prepare bankable projects to secure financial resources from the GCF and other Convention funds for their climate change adaptation and mitigation needs.

- LLDCs need to prioritize agricultural commercialization as a catalyst for industrialization.

Priority Area 6: Means of Implementation

In 2017, a total of $17.9 billion was received in ODA by the African LLDCs, a real increase of 24% since the VPoA was adopted. However, ODA was unevenly distributed between the African LLDCs, with three countries accounting for 46% of the group’s total that year. ODA remains a key source of external funding for the LLDCs. In 2016, ODA inflows represented over 10% of GNI in six African LLDCs. African LLDCs noted with concern that while ODA has increased, DAC members still fall short of their commitment targets.

African LLDCs received $8.2 billion in FDI flows. This amounted to 0.58% of total global FDI inflows and 36.2% of FDI inflows to all LLDCs which represents a 10.2% increase in the share of FDI flows to African LLDCs as compared to other LLDCs. FDI flows to the African LLDCs have been growing since 2010, apart from a slight dip in 2016 but the FDI were focused on a few
countries with three countries accounting for 65.4% of these flows in 2017. FDI flows are also concentrated on the extractive sector (specifically, to mining, quarrying and petroleum).

The African LLDCs received $5.34 billion in remittances, which was $1.6 billion less than what was received by the group in 2014. Remittance inflows to the African group were unevenly distributed, with the top three recipients accounting for 58.8% of inflows in 2016.

The African LLDCs are also concerned by the impact that illicit financial flows have in draining resources away from the LLDCs. Illicit financial flows have an adverse impact on domestic resource mobilization and on the sustainability of public finances. The activities that underlie illicit financial flows, such as corruption, embezzlement, fraud, tax evasion, safe havens that create incentives for transfer of stolen assets abroad, money-laundering and illegal exploitation of natural resources, are also detrimental to development.

The African LLDCs welcomed the strengthening of the Resident Coordinators in the context of United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform and underscore the critical role of Resident Coordinators in ensuring that the goals and priorities set out in the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the mainstreaming of the SDGs into national development plans and strategies in LLDCs and transit countries.

Recommendations

- LLDCs should strengthen their efforts in mobilizing domestic resources, including through carrying out reforms in tax administration, broadening the tax base and strengthening domestic capital markets.
- LLDCs need to enhance the level of good governance in key institutions that facilitate economic development and provide services, especially within the public sector and parastatal organizations, in order to bring about the much-needed operational efficiency and sustainability in these enterprises.
- Call on the international cooperation to stem corruption and identify, freeze and recover stolen assets and return them to their countries of origin, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
- Development partners should improve the quality of development aid by addressing constraints that limit the effectiveness of such aid, including linking development aid to national priorities.
- LLDCs will also need to better leverage ODA for attracting further finance from other sources such as FDI, public-private partnerships, and blended finance that could be utilized more effectively in promoting growth and structural transformation in the LLDCs.
- LLDCs should push for mainstreaming of the VPoA programme into the regional and continental agenda, as well as greater collaboration between the UN system organizations, the RECS and the African Union, to fully mainstream the programme into the latter’s strategies and action plans.
- LLDCs can attract more FDI by improving their regulatory environment and by engaging in regional integration initiatives and deepening their cooperation with neighbouring countries, especially transit countries.
- LLDCs need to identify and prepare bankable projects to secure financial and technical resources from multilateral initiatives such as the Africa Development Bank, East Africa
Development Bank, West African Development Bank, the World Bank’s Global Infrastructure Facility, and New Development Bank.

- UNDS should accord high priority to the economic sectors and productive capacity building in LLDCs and should enhance support to LLDCs in their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and their development objectives through enhanced mobilization of needed resources.
- Development partners are called upon to enhance their financial and technical support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063 and the Vienna Programme of Action.
- LLDCs that have not yet ratified the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs are urged to do so.

**Way Forward**

1. The meeting calls upon UN ECA to continue providing technical support to the Africa’s LLDCs in areas related to the priorities of the VPoA in order to accelerate its implementation.

2. The meeting requests UN ECA, to submit the outcome of the Africa Regional Review to the 52nd Session of the Economic Commission for Africa to be held 20 to 26 March 2019.

3. The meeting requests the UN ECA and UN OHRLLS to submit the outcome of the Africa Regional Review to the Comprehensive High-level Midterm review on the implementation of the VPoA to be held in December 2019 in New York and to other multilateral processes.

4. The meeting requests the UN ECA, in collaboration with UN-OHRLLS, to undertake the ten-year regional review of the implementation of the VPoA.

5. The Meeting calls on LLDCs, transit developing countries, development partners and regional and international organizations to actively participate in the Comprehensive High-level Midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action to be held in December 2019 in New York in accordance with the General Assembly resolutions 72/232 and 73/243.

6. The meeting requests that in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to, effective monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and undertake advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels.