AFRICA REGIONAL MID TERM REVIEW OF THE VPOA
18-19th MARCH 2019, MARRAKESH, MOROCCO

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR DOMA TSHERING, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BHUTAN TO THE UN, CO-FACILITATOR FOR THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE HL MTR OF THE VPOA

Mr. Chair, Ambassador Eric Tiare, Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the UN,
Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director of UN OHRLLS,
Mr. Moderator, Director of UNECA,
Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

As we conclude the Africa Regional Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024, I would like to join my distinguished colleague and Co-facilitator, Amb Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN, in extending our appreciation to the Government of Morocco for hosting us in this historic city of Marrakesh, and to both OHRLLS and UNECA for the excellent preparations and arrangements made for this meeting.

The Africa Midterm Review was the second of the three regional preparatory meetings mandated by UN General Assembly res 72/232. The sessions conducted over the past two days, which focused on each of the six priority areas of the VPOA, have been comprehensive, highly stimulating, and generated an excellent range of recommendations.

From our rich discussions over the past two days, allow me to draw briefly two observations:

First, on partnerships. Success over the remainder of the decade in implementation of the VPOA will hinge on the full and active participation of all stakeholders, namely LLDCs, transit countries, the UN System and relevant international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector.

I would like to note here, the active engagement at our meeting by several transit developing states, as well as development partners, which is most encouraging.

This speaks to the spirit of the VPOA, which notably offers a model in partnerships for all stakeholders to work collectively to support LLDCs in overcoming the challenges of lack of direct territorial access to the sea and remoteness, which constrain full integration into global markets and stunt productive capacities. And I would agree with our friend from Mali in saying that we need to hear more from the private sector in the course of our deliberations.
Second, while the geographical realities and implications of landlockedness pose daunting challenges to LLDCs, allow me to suggest that these challenges also provide opportunities:

- Opportunities to learn from one another’s national experiences and best practices;
- opportunities to take advantage of exciting innovation in the field of science and technology that will allow LLDCs to leapfrog and transform our economies;
- and also opportunities to strengthen existing collaboration and forge new partnerships, that will eventually help us to unlock our potential, and transform our countries from landlocked to landlinked.

The draft outcome of the Africa Regional Midterm Review Meeting will be transmitted to the Conference of African Finance, Planning and Economic Development Ministers at UNECA, and will be recommended for their adoption. This will serve as an important input to enrich and further inform deliberations in New York, as we move towards the elaboration of the outcome document of the HL Mid Term Review of the VPOA.

Together with the outcome of the Europe and Asia Regional Review Meeting, adopted in February this year in Bangkok, the outcome of the forthcoming Latin America Regional Review Meeting, and the outcomes of the various pre-conference events coordinated by UN OHRLLS, the report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the VPOA will all serve as critical inputs for the outcome document of the HL MTR.

As provided for in res 72/232 and 73/243, the HL Mid Term Review, which will be convened in NY in December 2019, will adopt an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration.

Looking ahead at the road before us, Amb Kickert and I as Co Facilitators, eagerly look forward to listening further to the views of member states and other stakeholders, to being guided by your national perspectives, aspirations and priorities, as well as learning of your challenges and concerns. We are committed to an open, inclusive, and transparent process. We look forward to working closely with all partners towards a successful outcome that will bolster the efforts of LLDCs to overcome the multifaceted challenges of being landlocked and to accelerate the march towards sustainable development.

As I conclude with these thoughts, I thank all panelists, and delegations for their valuable contributions to our discussions, I also wish to thank the interpreters for an excellent job, and I wish you all a safe journey back home!

Thank you.

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