Report of the Chair

Midterm review meeting of Latin American countries preparatory to the comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024

Santiago, 11–12 June 2019

Introduction

The Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 was adopted in 2014 at the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries. The General Assembly of the United Nations decided, in its resolution 72/232, to convene in 2019 a comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, which would be preceded by regional preparatory meetings. The high-level midterm review will review progress made in the implementation of Programme of Action, identify obstacles and constraints encountered and actions and initiatives needed to overcome them, as well as new challenges and emerging issues. The high-level midterm review shall adopt an inter-governmentally negotiated and agreed outcome in the form of a political declaration.

In resolution 711(XXXVI), adopted at the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held in Mexico City from 23 to 27 May 2016, and resolution 732(XXXVII), adopted at the thirty-seventh session of ECLAC, held in Havana from 7 to 11 May 2018, the countries stressed the importance of the Vienna Programme of Action and requested the secretariat of the Commission to support the regional review by landlocked and transit countries in Latin America in the framework of the midterm comprehensive review.

Accordingly, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and ECLAC organized the Midterm review meeting of Latin American countries preparatory to the comprehensive midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, in Santiago, on 11 and 12 June 2019. The meeting was attended by senior government policymakers and other stakeholders from Latin American landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and transit countries, development partners, and participants from the United Nations system, relevant international and regional organizations, and civil society representatives.

The Presiding Officers elected were as follows: Paraguay (Chair) and Plurinational State of Bolivia (Vice-Chair).

Over the last five years, progress has been made in the implementation of the priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action in the Latin America region. However, the progress is not adequate for the landlocked countries to achieve the goals of the Vienna Programme of Action and meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Chair highlighted the great spirit of collaboration and appreciated the goodwill between the landlocked countries and the transit countries participating in the meeting.
The meeting proposed the following recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

**Priority area 1: Fundamental transit policy issues**

- 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 Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) 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 Transit Guidelines of the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the use of other mechanisms to monitor travel time along transit transport corridors, such as like the WCO Time Release Study is encouraged.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to make additional efforts to meet the Vienna Programme of Action specific objectives of reducing travel time along corridors; reducing cargo dwell times at seaports; reducing time spent at the land border; and, with the support of the United Nations and other international and regional organizations and development partners, regularly collecting relevant data needed to monitor the specific objectives.
- Landlocked and transit countries are encouraged to regionally coordinate national logistics policies and take into consideration private sector logistics strategies.

**Priority area 2: Infrastructure development and maintenance**

**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 (inland waterways, road and rail) infrastructure.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to develop and/or upgrade international and transboundary transport and transit corridors in a coordinated manner, encompassing all modes of transportation to address the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to consider the recommendations for promoting a shared vision for better governance of natural resources and infrastructure agreed at the High-level Regional Dialogue on the Governance of Natural Resources and Infrastructure, held in Santiago on 8 November 2016.
- The regional financial institutions, United Nations system and other development partners should strengthen their technical assistance programmes for improving the institutional
capacities of the LLDCs to formulate and implement bankable infrastructure development projects more effectively and efficiently.

- LLDCs are encouraged to integrate the development and maintenance of transboundary transport infrastructure in their national development strategies and ensure that these are not stand-alone initiatives.
- Development partners, international financial institutions, and international and regional organizations are called upon to support LLDCs and transit countries in developing climate change resilient transport infrastructure.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to use technology to increase productivity and sustainability of the current infrastructure and logistics services.

**Energy**

- LLDCs are encouraged to support increased access to electricity where this has not been achieved and close the rural-urban gap.
- LLDCs endowed with energy are encouraged to use electricity in transforming their productive capacities and boosting their exports of manufacturing products.
- LLDCs are encouraged to use hydroelectric power and natural gas as drivers for regional energy integration.
- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to support expansion and upgrading of supply, transmission and distribution infrastructure and increase investments in improving energy efficiency.

**Information and communications technology (ICT)**

- LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to collaborate to establish ICT infrastructure, applications and services with the support of governments, the private sector, development partners, multilateral financial and development institutions and regional banks.
- LLDCs are encouraged to create an appropriate enabling environment, including the necessary policies and 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 closure of the digital divide.
- LLDCs are encouraged to take into account the areas of action and objectives of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2020), adopted at the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), from 18 to 20 April 2018.
- The international community is invited to provide capacity-building support to LLDCs to improve their business environment, in order to attract and retain the private sector in the ICT sector, especially in the use of ICT infrastructure to promote trade, improve trade logistics, and enhance productivity and structural economic transformation.

**Priority 3: International trade and trade facilitation**

- LLDCs are encouraged to 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 invited to support LLDCs in diversifying their exports, including through the transfer of relevant technologies and support in developing their productive capacities.

LLDCs are encouraged to enhance efforts aimed at improving their business environment.

The United Nations 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 of WTO.

LLDCs are encouraged to promote greater use of technology-driven and ICT solutions to trade facilitation, including the introduction of paperless trade, the automation of customs procedures and customs clearance systems, and the implementation of single window environments.

Priority area 4: Regional integration and cooperation

LLDCs are encouraged to continue to increase regional and bilateral cooperation with neighbouring States to improve their integration into regional and international markets.

LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to increase intraregional trade integration by strengthening productive linkages and supporting the development of supply chains within the region.

LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to enhance the development effectiveness of South-South and triangular cooperation, in line with the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation,\(^1\) adopted in Buenos Aires in March 2019.

International and regional development partners, United Nations agencies 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 and to promote greater sharing of experiences between regions and subregions.

LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to make use of the technical assistance and capacity-building support provided by relevant international organizations towards the effective implementation of relevant international conventions and regional cooperation agreements and frameworks.

LLDCs and transit countries are encouraged to consider undertaking regional integration initiatives that encompass investment, research and development, industrial development and regional connectivity.

LLDC and transit countries are encouraged to develop methodologies to design, finance, operate and regulate regional infrastructure.

Priority 5: Structural economic transformation

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

---

\(^1\) A/CONF.235/3.
• LLDCs are encouraged to focus on enhancing their capacity in higher value added products and high-productivity sectors, and should also explore the opportunity for public-private partnerships to enable this growth.

• Development partners are encouraged to provide technical, financial and capacity-building assistance so that LLDCs can develop a strong industrial base and continue investment in research and development in order to be able to attract further economic investment.

• LLDCs are encouraged to utilize new and existing technologies in the production of manufactured and agricultural products to add value and connect into higher ends of regional and global value chains.

• LLDCs are encouraged to implement industrial and technological policies which foster structural transformation in a direction compatible with sustainability. The technological revolution should be directed at decoupling and a low-carbon growth path.

Priority area 6: Means of implementation

• LLDCs are encouraged to strengthen their efforts to mobilize domestic resources, including through carrying out reforms in tax administration, broadening the tax base and strengthening domestic capital markets.

• LLDCs are encouraged to better leverage official development assistance (ODA) for attracting further finance from other sources such as foreign direction investment (FDI), public-private partnerships, and blended finance that could be utilized more effectively in promoting growth and structural transformation in the LLDCs.

• LLDCs are encouraged to 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.

• The United Nations development system should accord a 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.

• Development partners are encouraged to enhance their financial and technical support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Vienna Programme of Action.

Way forward

The Chair identified following recommendations:

1. ECLAC should continue providing technical support to the LLDCs in the Latin American region in areas related to the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action in order to accelerate its implementation.
2. ECLAC, in collaboration with UN-OHRLLS, should undertake the 10-year regional review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.
3. Relevant international and regional organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), among others, are requested to continue providing technical assistance to landlocked developing countries and transit countries in the region.
4. LLDCs, transit countries, development partners and regional and international organizations should actively participate in the comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, to be held in New York in December 2019, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 72/232 and 73/243.

5. The Chair should report on this meeting and its recommendations at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2020.

6. In accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, UN-OHRLS 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.