Statement by H.E. Mr. Mher MARGARYAN
Permanent Representative of Armenia

At the Comprehensive High-level Midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014–2024

05 December 2019

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande for prioritizing the needs of the Landlocked Developing Countries in the GA agenda. We also thank the High Representative Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu and her Office for continuous efforts to mobilize international support for the implementation of programmes and initiatives for the LLDCs in partnership with the relevant agencies and bodies of the United Nations, civil society, academia and other relevant stakeholders.

The High-level Midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action is an important milestone to assess the progress and identify the gaps and challenges ahead of the second, decisive half of realization of the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action.

The implementation of the VPoA should be seen in the larger context of the realization of the 2030 Agenda as well as its interlinkage with other strategic framework documents, such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Addressing the specific challenges faced by the landlocked developing countries is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a landlocked developing country, Armenia strongly advocates for regional and sub-regional cooperation and connectivity through trade and transport. In development of regional connectivity we are guided by the principles of inclusivity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership. Connectivity plays a crucial role for promoting cross-border cooperation and bringing closer the people divided by conflicts and crises, thus promoting confidence and trust.
Despite the volatile situation in our region Armenia continues to develop its transit potential as a corridor between Europe and Asia. The project of North-South highway, which is currently underway, will connect the Persian Gulf with the ports of the Black sea.

The Government of Armenia prioritizes development of Information and Communication Technologies as an important tool to lower costs, facilitate access to foreign markets, thus contributing to increase of foreign trade. With very high rate of internet penetration and rapidly growing IT industry, Armenia has ensured open and affordable Internet access throughout the country.

Mr. President,

I would like to stress that unilateral coercive measures are detrimental to the sustainable development of landlocked countries and their effective integration to the global markets. The continuing land blockade of Armenia’s borders by its neighbours from West and East, multiplies the challenges arising from landlockedness. The attempts to isolate our country from regional economic cooperation and transport corridors, violate the principles of international law and are contrary to the aims of the Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as well as the norms of the multilateral trading system.

The closed borders, which hamper Armenia’s access to the sea, significantly increase the costs of imports and exports, the transit communication routes. The land blockade directly contradicts the letter and spirit of the Agenda 2030, impeding realization of economic and social rights and economic participation, thus negatively affecting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Construction of regional transport corridors, circumventing a particular country, not only doesn’t promote regional connectivity and cooperation, but solidifies the dividing lines, thus, it is crucial that the international community, international financial organizations and other development actors make thorough and careful assessment of regional transport infrastructure projects.

Mr. President,

Armenia attaches special importance to inclusive regional cooperation between landlocked and transit countries as an essential prerequisite to remove political barriers for free movement of people, goods and services and realization of economic and social rights and right to development.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Armenia’s commitment to full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in cooperation with the United Nations and our international partners.
Thank you.