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Second Committee

Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs

Statement delivered by

H.E. Jan Kickert
Permanent Representative of Austria

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Check against delivery
Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues,

We fully align ourselves with the statement made by the European Union.

This is an important time for LLDCs as we undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in implementing the Vienna Programme of Action and look at what remains to be done. The latest report by the Secretary General shows one thing clearly: we are not on track. As the VPoA is integral to the 2030 Agenda, accelerating its implementation is fundamental for the LLDCs to be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a landlocked country ourselves, Austria understands well the challenges that confront LLDCs. It is for this reason that we hosted the Second UN Conference on LLDCs in Vienna in 2014, that we co-chair the group of friends in NY, and that we accepted to take on the co-facilitation role, together with Bhutan, for the consultations of the Outcome Document. We are grateful that the High-Level Political Declaration was consensually agreed by all Member States.

While physical distance and remoteness cannot be erased, many of the challenges related to landlockedness can be successfully overcome.

The support of development partners is crucial to complement the efforts of LLDCs in this regard. Austrian Official Development Assistance to LLDCs in 2017 amounted to 42.7 million EUR. Half of Austria's priority countries fall under the LLDC category. Most recently Austria has allocated additional humanitarian funds totaling 1.4 million euros to Ethiopia and Burkina Faso, where situations of conflict exacerbated by the impact of climate change create dire needs.

There is no doubt – we need more resolve in accelerating the transition towards a climate neutral, circular and resilient economy, and in strengthening our commitments under the Paris Agreement.

For Austria, regional cooperation and integration is key to address the challenges of landlockedness. We are an industrial country with a small domestic market and depend on our export economy. 6 out of 10 euros we earn from exports. For us, the positive impact of joining the European Union cannot be stressed enough, as some 70% of Austria's foreign trade is intra-regional with other EU member states.

The private sector has a critical role to play in the implementation of the VPoA. Therefore, LLDCs should look what is needed to attract increased and more diversified foreign direct investment. It is our experience, that to fully leverage the impact of the private sector, a stable, predictable and enabling investment environment is needed. To this end, the rule of law, good governance, the respect of human rights, gender equality, as well as accountable and transparent institutions are essential "factors for success".

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we continue on our path of the 2030 Agenda, a focused cooperation with the 32 LLDCs is more important than ever to turn landlockedness into landlinkedness.

You can continue to count on Austria in this regard.

Thank you.