High-level Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)
New York, 5-6 December 2019
EU statement

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

I would like to start by thanking Austria and the Kingdom of Bhutan for their efforts as co-facilitators of the negotiations on the Political Declaration. We also commend the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) for its support throughout the preparatory process.

While we review progress achieved mid-way through the Vienna Programme of Action, but also assess challenges ahead, let us remind ourselves that the international community has to continue to support the landlocked developing countries on their path towards sustainability and resilience.

And indeed, the European Consensus on Development reconfirms the commitment of the EU to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, taking into account the diverse challenges faced by developing countries, including Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

Excellencies,

Landlocked developing countries face specific vulnerabilities. Vulnerability to the effects of climate change, lack of access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, and high transit costs and risks impose serious constraints to their development, often preventing them from reaping full benefit from the trade and investment opportunities created by globalisation.

The EU and its Member States provide more than half of global Official Development Assistance and remain by far the largest donor in the world.

But addressing these specific challenges requires action at all relevant levels.

It has become clear that past financing patterns will not be sufficient to meet the 2030 Agenda; it is crucial to mobilise all available financing flows.
For this to happen, it is crucial that LLDCs develop a strategic vision of how they plan to finance their sustainable development objectives. That is why we are working with the United Nations in helping interested countries develop Integrated National Financing Frameworks.

Integrated National Financing Frameworks bring together the different elements of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda at country level, while also facilitating nationally-owned and government-led implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. They lay out a financing strategy, helping governments prioritise actions manage risks, and make the most of diverse financing sources.

Trade infrastructure is crucial for the growth performance of LLDCs. Existing gaps in infrastructure networks and sector inefficiencies hinder economic growth. Transport investment is needed to enhance interconnectivity.

The EU remains focused on making better use of all means of implementation – including capacity-building and mobilising more domestic resources and private investment. It is in that context that we launched the External Investment Plan for Africa and the European neighbourhood. The EIP aims to generate up to 44 billion euros of new investment – in sectors with the greatest potential to drive decent jobs and growth – from sustainable cities and agriculture, to energy, transport and digital infrastructure.

The EU also works on sustainable finance to help investors identify and seize environmentally sustainable investment opportunities, thereby connecting global finance with local financing needs. We support countries in addressing the hurdles that prevent them from accessing international global markets and attracting investments, including by building pipelines of bankable projects. The EIP supports the improvement of the investment climate and facilitates public-private dialogue.

Excellencies,

The EU is committed to promoting the LLDCs’ integration into the multilateral trading system. Support to trade facilitation is an essential component of EU’s development cooperation. We support this process through our Aid for Trade Strategy.

Regional integration enlarges market size, reduces the cost of inputs, enhances competitiveness to the member countries and helps attract new FDI. Trade with regional partners will ensure an increase in investors’ and consumers’ access to goods and services and ensure that economies of scale can be achieved.

The EU supports regional cooperation efforts and welcomes the creation of networks of regional renewable energy as energy dependency is a major source of economic vulnerability and a key concern for many LLDCs. The promotion of access to sustainable, renewable energy and energy efficiency remains crucial.

Finally, the EU is a firm believer that economic development must be combined with protection of the environment. Circular economies help to close the loop of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, thereby increasing product value. At the same time, they can contribute to climate-neutral production and resource efficiency, and foster innovation, economic growth and job creation. Sustainable supply chains can ensure that LLDCs are fully integrated in the global sustainability transition to meet the SDGs and deliver on the Paris Agreement.
In closing, the EU and its Member States would like to reiterate our unwavering commitment to work with our LLDC partners. We will continue our engagement and concrete support for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Thank you very much.