Thank you Mr. President,

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Palestine on behalf of Group of 77.

We would also like to thank the co-facilitators from Bhutan and Austria for their leadership and dynamism in the finalization of the political declaration.

Today’s meeting provides a useful platform in assessing opportunities and challenges faced by LLDCs.

Mr. President,

Despite the remarkable socioeconomic progress that the world has witnessed over the past few decades, the geographic remoteness of LLDCs compounded by weak transit, transport and customs infrastructure, resource and capacity constraints and limited access to technology have prevented the effective integration of LLDCs into the global economic and trading system.

The implementation of the VPoA constitutes an integral part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment of the international community engrained in this Agenda is to leave no one behind, including LLDCs.

Mr. President,

India remains fully committed to extend its support and experience to LLDCs as a transit country and as a fellow developing country.

India has established the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative to improve economic cooperation and transport connectivity between the members of the grouping. Cooperation under BBIN is also being discussed in the areas of power, water resources management, inland water ways and rail connectivity.
The trade and air-services agreements between India-Nepal and India-Bhutan confers transit rights for the exports and imports without customs duties or trade restrictions and efficient tourist connectivity.

The India-Afghanistan direct air freight corridor, established in 2017, provides Afghan nationals, including farmers and trading community quick and direct access to the Indian markets for health services, education and marketing their produce and commodities. India is also cooperating with Afghanistan and Iran for development of the Chahbahar Port.

India is also working on the International North-South Transport Corridor, and has joined the Ashgabat Agreement which envisages facilitation of transit and transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.

India’s two latest initiatives - the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure are aimed at assisting developing countries, LDCs and LLDCs to access affordable solar energy and assist with developing disaster resilient infrastructure frameworks respectively. These initiatives will help in successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement.

In 2017, in the spirit of South-South cooperation, India established the US$ 150 million India-UN Development Partnership Fund, which is aimed at Southern-owned and led, demand-driven, and transformational projects aimed at fulfilling the SDGs in developing, LDC and LLDCs. In just about two years, the Fund has been able to develop 38 projects in 36 partnering countries.

Mr. President,

Let me once again reassure you of India’s strong support and steadfast commitment to continue sharing our development experience and expertise with LLDCs to overcome their challenges and achieve the 2030 Agenda.

I thank You.