STATEMENT
BY
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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
DURING
THE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH-LEVEL MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE
VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LANDLOCKED
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
Thursday, December 5, 2019
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

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Mr. President,

1. At the outset, I wish to thank you for convening this important meeting on the comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. It has been exactly five years since the adoption of the Vienna Programme in December 2014. We therefore welcome and endorse the adoption of the Political Declaration here today. My delegation further welcomes the progress made since 2014 while recognizing the need for accelerated action in order to make significant progress on the six mutually reinforcing priority areas of the Programme namely: transit, infrastructure development; international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and, most importantly, means of implementation.

3. Following the adoption of the Vienna Programme, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda further recognized and reaffirmed that LLDCs face specific challenges and deserve special attention while stressing the importance of trade as a key means of implementing the Programme. Nonetheless, LLDCs continue to encounter multiple barriers which prevent them from fully harnessing their trade potential.

Mr. President,

4. The geographical impediment of LLDCs has resulted in their remoteness and isolation from world markets. The lack of direct territorial access to the sea has required LLDCs to depend on transiting through other countries. This, coupled with cumbersome border-crossing procedures and inadequate transit infrastructure, has resulted in LLDCs facing disproportionately high transport and trade transaction costs which are almost double that of coastal countries. Furthermore, it has eroded their competitiveness while affecting economic growth and sustainable development.

5. As we proceed with the implementation of the Vienna Programme for the next 5 years, there is need for strengthened co-operation between LLDCs and transit countries in order to execute innovative solutions that reduce the high costs of transport and trade.

6. Some of the key areas where LLDCs and transit countries can enhance their cooperation include: infrastructure development and maintenance, particularly, in transport, energy, and ICT; implementation of the legal framework that make clearance of goods faster; improvement and harmonization of customs procedures and standards; harmonization of policies between the LLDCs and transit countries.
Mr. President,

7. The sustainable development of LLDCs is particularly important for our region as sixteen of the thirty-two LLDCs are African nations and eleven of these sixteen countries are among the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). In May 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCTA) entered into force and is expected to have a transformative impact on Africa’s economic and social development.

8. This historical Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) will ease the free movement of people, goods and services across the continent, hence transforming the 1.2 billion African population into a seamless investment and growth platform. The objective is to promote shared prosperity benefiting even the smallest African economies and delivering to the local population. This regional initiative will play an important role during the next implementation phase of the Vienna Programme. It is crucial to ensure that specific needs of LLDCs continue to be addressed in line with this regional priority.

9. Beyond alignment with regional priorities and initiatives, sustainable financing continues to be critical to our efforts to successfully implement the Vienna Programme. Achieving this will require that all sources of finance be tapped into, and that all partners- including Member States, international organizations and the private sector- work together in supporting LLDCs. Capacity building and technical assistance are also essential in the implementation of the Programme.

10. In conclusion, Kenya remains committed to our common objective to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions which includes the successful implementation of the Vienna Programme. Addressing the specific needs of LLDCs is key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals so that we collectively succeed together.

I thank you.