Nordic Joint Statement
Delivered by
State Secretary Jens Frølich Holte, of Norway

Excellencies, colleagues,

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Landlocked developing countries are among the most vulnerable countries in the world. One third of their population still live in extreme poverty. The mortality rate of children under 5 years of age stands at 6%. Landlocked Developing Countries are also highly vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change such as drought, desertification and loss of biodiversity.

Landlocked developing countries face a unique combination of obstacles, ones related to geographical location, transport, infrastructure, border-crossings, commodity-dependency and low productivity.

However, these obstacles are not insurmountable. And the Vienna program of action is a recipe for overcoming them. Indeed, good progress has already been made.

The export sector as a whole has become more diversified. The average proportion of the population in landlocked developing countries with access to electricity has increased from 49 to 56%. And in Africa some trade corridors, including the
Trans-Kalahari corridor, have achieved the objectives set out in the Vienna program of action on improving transit conditions.

The Nordic countries recognize the challenges that come with being landlocked. We are partners in overcoming these obstacles. We have some of the highest levels of ODA in the world, reaching the UN target of 0,7% of GNI in the case of Denmark and 1% for Norway and Sweden.

Our ODA is targeted towards the most vulnerable states. My own country, Norway, has for example increased the percentage of our aid to the least developed countries from 48% in 2016 to 53% in 2018. A significant proportion of this aid goes to landlocked states.

We call also on other countries to increase their financing to landlocked developing states. In particular in the areas of climate risk mitigation and disaster risk reduction and response, which need more adequate financing. On both these issues landlocked developing countries are hit hard by effects of crises they have no little or no role in creating. While we work together as a global community to reduce the threats of climate change, we must also show solidarity with those hit the hardest by the impacts and support them in building resilience.

The Nordic countries welcome progress in attracting private investments and developing public-private partnerships in many landlocked developing states. Important steps have also been taken in generating additional national funds for development efforts.

Trade facilitation programs can play an important role in assisting landlocked developing states in increasing their level of trade and are of great importance to the Nordic countries. My own country Norway is the biggest single donor to the Trade Facilitation Support Program of the World Bank.

In closing, colleagues, landlocked developing states face numerous challenges, but none that cannot be overcome with the right policies and partnerships. We, the Nordic countries, will remain steadfast partners to landlocked developing countries.

Thank you.