Mr. President,

Allow me to first congratulate you on holding of this high-level meeting, which will provide us with an opportunity to take stock of the progress to integrate landlocked countries into global economies.

I align my statement with the statement delivered by the State of Palestine on behalf of G77 and China.

Mr. President

Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), in view of their specific geographical remoteness face specific challenges.

These challenges are exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure, connectivity and corridor facilities to overcome structural deficiencies and limited capacities to undergo world trade.

It is worrisome to note that progress in priority areas of the VPoA remained mix and still one third of the LLDCs’ population continues to live in poverty as LLDCs still account for less than one percent of the global merchandise trade.

In order to overcome these shortcomings, there is a need to progress on structural and economic transformation in global financial and connectivity architecture.

Mr. President,

As a transit country Pakistan has made significant steps and concerted efforts to provide assistance to the landlocked developing countries.

Our Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement was signed in 2010 with an aim to provide necessary development means to the landlocked Afghanistan. The volume of trade from this corridor only in 2018-19 has been 5,516 million US$. 
Opening of Torkham crossing for commercial traffic on a 24/7 basis have added another tangible dimension to close cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

One of our reason of joining the China's Belt and Road Initiative is our understanding that it fully complements and contributes to the goals and objectives set in the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda.

It is underpinned by connectivity and cooperation, in reshaping trade, investment and infrastructure development in Asia, Africa and Europe.

The scale and scope of the initiative is enormous and it stands out as the most significant initiative of our times for promoting transnational connectivity, enhancing trade and investment and facilitating cooperation to fully utilize the economic potential of the participating countries.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a central part of the BRI network and is an all-inclusive economic corridor for the region. It is the fastest and most effective among all projects in the BRI. CPEC is expected to bring huge economic and development benefits to both countries and the region.

By promoting regional connectivity, enhancing trade and investment and stimulating regional growth, CPEC is expected to help improve the lives of an estimated 3 billion people in China, South Asia, Central Asia and beyond.

Our energy connectivity project CASA-1000 will further our efforts of connectivity with the landlocked countries in Central Asia.

Our participation in the SAFTA, the SCO, and the ECO is proof of Pakistan's commitment to the development of landlocked countries of our region in line with VPoA.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would reiterate that Pakistan stands ready to support LLDCs as we understand that VPoA is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and its full implementation is fundamental to leave no one behind and to reach the furthest behind first.

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