Statement made by the Delegation of Sri Lanka at the
Comprehensive High Level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna
Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2022
5th December 2019

President of the General Assembly
Secretary General
Excellencies
Delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of the G-77 and China.

Sri Lanka appreciates the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene this meeting, which comes at a very crucial and opportune time. Over 400 million people in 32 landlocked countries face a set of unique challenges arising out of their countries’ geographical location. Their lack of access to the sea and international markets, has negatively impacted their development and trade, as well as social progress and the environment.

The Vienna Programme of Action, adopted five years ago, is a comprehensive and ambitious Plan to address these challenges. While the Secretary General’s report indicates that progress has been made in areas such as health, education and the empowerment of women and girls, there is still much to be done to achieve the targets set out in the Programme.

The Report illustrates that the growth rate of real GDP per capita in these countries has decreased, while inflation has increased. The participation of LLDCs in global trade remains minimal, with their share of global merchandise exports falling to just 0.98% in 2018. It is a cause for concern that one third of the population in Landlocked Developing Countries live in poverty.
New and emerging challenges have also exacerbated the negative conditions for Landlocked Developing Countries. Climate change continues to pose a threat to the development initiatives of these countries, particularly impacting agriculture, while contributing to land degradation and desertification.

Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we move closer to reaching the deadline for achieving the targets in the 2030 Development Agenda, it is crucial that we collectively enhance our efforts not to leave anyone behind. It is crucial therefore that we seize this opportunity to not only identify the gaps and challenges in the Programme’s implementation but also decide on the way forward.

Sri Lanka believes that building resilient infrastructure, particularly for transit transport, energy and information and communication technologies, would be crucial towards integrating Landlocked Developing Countries into the global economy and increase their competitiveness. Strengthening their capacity to meet challenges arising out of climate change and boosting their agriculture sector will also enhance their development initiatives.

Partnerships also play an important role in the development of Landlocked Developing Countries, from transit countries and development partners to civil society and youth. Our collective commitment to the Vienna Programme of Action has been illustrated by the adoption of this Declaration today. Sri Lanka congratulates the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Bhutan for their successful facilitation of this Declaration.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Sri Lanka’s commitment to the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and re-affirm support to collective initiatives to ensure the progress of Landlocked Developing Countries.

Thank you!