STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR PHILIP ODIDA, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MIDTERM REVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE DECADE 2014-2024, 5-6 DECEMBER 2019

The President of the General Assembly,

Excellencies;

Distinguished Delegates;

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished Chairs of the Group of LLDCs and of the G77 & China.

I wish to extend my delegation’s appreciation to you Mr. President, and to the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, for coordinating this important high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. Uganda reiterates its continued support to the full
implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action 2014-2024, which is in line with the 2030 Agenda as well as Uganda’s development agenda as enshrined in its Vision 2040 and its associated National Development Plans.

Mr. President;

In the past 5 years, Uganda has made progress in the implementation of the programme in a number of areas;

Firstly, by implementing policies that facilitate the free movement of people and other factors of production within the East African Community (EAC). In this regard, Uganda commenced issuance of the EAC Passport in January 2018.

Secondly, a Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking system (RECTS) that serves Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda was launched in February 2017. The system is designed to enable a seamless flow of transit cargo with all the revenue collection authorities in the three countries having a single view of cargo along the northern corridor. This has resulted into reduced transit time for regional, and national transactions, improved truck turnaround time and suppressed transit diversion and improved trade facilitation.

Thirdly, with regard to transport infrastructure; Uganda has stepped up efforts to improve the quality of its transport network, the total number of paved road network in the country have increased to 4,551 kms. Major roads have also been developed to link the country to major border posts of the neighboring countries of Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and South Sudan.
In addition a Standard Gauge Railway project and network is being developed in collaboration with the EAC Partner States to operate as a modern, fast, reliable, efficient and high capacity seamless single system. In preparation for the production of oil, construction of key oil roads and the Hoima International Airport (HIA) are being fast-tracked as part of the crucial infrastructure requirements for the Oil and Gas industry.

**Mr. President;**

At the regional level, Uganda was among the first countries that signed and ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCTA) which aims to create a single continental market for goods and services, expand intra African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation regimes and instruments across RECs and across Africa in general; and enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploiting opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources.

Uganda’s economic transformation agenda is based on the National Development Plan (NDP). The second NDP in a series of six running up to 2040 is currently under implementation. Under the plan, three growth opportunities and two fundamentals have been identified as having the potential to push the country to middle income status. The growth opportunities include; Agriculture, Tourism, minerals, oil and gas development, while the fundamental
requirements remain infrastructure and human capital development. We believe that investment in the above opportunities and fundamental sectors would aim at maximizing sectoral linkages and increasing efficiency in resource use.

In terms of enabling policies, Uganda further launched the Coffee 2020 Roadmap targeting to increase coffee production to 20 million 60-kilogramme bags per annum. Statistics indicate that exports earnings from coffee per year can increase to US$1.5 billion from the current US$ 439.2 million. Furthermore, the sector has the ability to attract more than $1 billion dollars in financing and investment and improve the livelihoods of 1.2 million households who participate in the coffee value chain.

Mr. President;

Uganda’s domestic revenue mobilization efforts continue to be strengthened. Over the last decade, tax revenue has been growing at an average of 17 percent since FY 2007/08, while tax to GDP ratio, has been growing at an average of 0.2 percent compared to the annual target 0.5 percent. Government has directed its efforts towards widening the tax base and enhancing compliance. A Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy has been developed to inform reforms in the tax system both in the medium and long term.

In conclusion Mr. President;
Uganda expresses its appreciation, once again, to the co-facilitators (Austria and Bhutan) for leading the Intergovernmental negotiations that resulted into a concise political declaration outlining specific actions to fully implement the Vienna Programme of Action. We call upon all relevant stakeholders to provide the necessary support to the LLDCs to accelerate their national efforts to implement the VPoA priority area strategies.

The Vienna Programme of Action has been instrumental in guiding Uganda’s development agenda as a landlocked developing country. The Vienna Programme and Uganda’s national development plans are synchronized in timeframe of implementation. The focus of NDPII is to strengthen the country’s competitiveness for sustainable wealth creation, employment and inclusive growth embodies the principles of the Vienna Programme of Action.

I thank you for your attention.