Statement on the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it is an honor to be here today to review the progress made since the adoption of the Vienna Program of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC). On behalf of the United States, we are pleased to join consensus on the political declaration, and I extend our appreciation to the Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS as well as the President of the General Assembly for their leadership in coordinating this important mid-term review.

The United States understands the challenges that face the LLDCs, such as transit-policy issues, international trade, and regional integration. Despite these challenges, we have seen progress by many countries.

For example, sweeping reforms like the African Continental Free Trade Area, which entered into force this year, promise to open markets, lower barriers to trade and investment, and lay the groundwork for greater competitiveness, trade diversification, and economic growth for the 16 LLDCs in Africa. We congratulate the African Union, its Member States, and those partners who have been working toward this achievement.

The United States understands that aid alone cannot resolve the challenges that face the LLDCs. That is why agreements like AfCFTA are key. In every developing country in which we work, we must identify where public interventions are most appropriate and where there are opportunities for the private sector to lead. Development assistance is no substitute for economic growth led by private enterprise. Sustainable development requires that both the public and private sectors work together to identify and address development challenges, including in the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world.

Additionally, lending and private investment is becoming increasingly accessible to developing countries. However, these inflows can come with risks, such as a lack of transparency and unsustainable borrowing, to which countries with weak institutions, high levels of corruption, and macroeconomic challenges are particularly vulnerable. That is why increased debt transparency and fiscal discipline, along with strong governance, are essential for LLDCs.
Despite positive signs, we understand progress has been slow, uneven, and insufficient for many. We applaud the efforts of this High-Level Midterm Review to shed light on the challenges the LLDCs face and to focus our efforts where the need is greatest.

We now take this opportunity to make important points of clarification on some of the language contained in this political declaration.

Regarding references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, WTO, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and climate change we refer you to our Global Explanation of Position delivered during Second Committee on November 21, 2019.

Thank You.