

**Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations  
of the Kingdom of Lesotho – Honourable Matsepo Molise -Ramakoae  
on behalf of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries  
at the High-Level Political Forum session on  
Mobilizing International Solidarity, Accelerating Action and Embarking on  
New Pathways to Realize the 2030 Agenda and Respond to COVID-19:  
African Countries, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing  
Countries**

*9 July 2020, New York, virtual platform*

Madam Chair (*Ms. Mona Juul, President of ECOSOC*),  
Distinguished panelists,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to address all of you today, though virtually, on behalf of 32 Landlocked developing countries within the framework of the 2020 High-level Political Forum.

We firmly believe that this year's HLPF main theme (*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*) underlines the utmost importance of the multilateral actions as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative socio-economic and humanitarian impacts. The most vulnerable, in particular the LDCs, LLDCs and African states will be the most affected and will be further left behind.

The Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs held in December last year revealed that one third of the population of LLDCs is still living in extreme poverty and economic growth of LLDCs had declined over the five year review period.

It also revealed that the participation of LLDCs in global trade remained below 1%. The proportion of people using the Internet in developed countries is more than three times that in LLDCs. Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity increased to almost 51% in 2017 compared to world average of 25%. The LDCs and LLDCs, already experiencing declining FDI inflows since 2011. This is to mention but a few challenges faced by LLDCs.

Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen,

To keep our recovery efforts tuned, joint urgent actions from LLDC Governments, the UN resident-coordinators and UN regional assets as well as IFIs and private sector are needed.

As IMF estimates, more than 100 billion dollars have flown out from developing countries, and that's a record number. Thus, we need the UN to assist us to enhance the business and investment environment to attract back and incentivize the new public and private investors.

We see the further ways forward through enhancing such assistance to:

- expand social protection and humanitarian programmes to help prevent vulnerable groups from falling deeper into poverty;
- strengthen food supply chains, and promote measures to facilitate affordable food supplies.
- strengthen development interventions that address the root causes of extreme poverty, food insecurity and humanitarian crises.

ODA to LLDCs fell by 4.1% in real terms in 2018. Thus, we call on the development partners to increase ODA to LLDCs, but not at the expense of humanitarian efforts and other bilateral channels of cooperation.

To conclude, Madam Chair, I would like to reiterate that we have only five years left to implement the Vienna Programme of Action. Thus, we need to accelerate international actions. In this vein, the Secretariat of OHRLLS, upon request from the LLDC Member States has prepared together with many other UN entities the UN Roadmap on Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA.

Just this morning we had a chance to discuss the Roadmap thoroughly. It is a well balanced detailed document, which will help LLDCs to better understand the whole picture of where and how different UN agencies could assist us in implementing the VPoA and Agenda 2030 and get more coordinated practical deliverables.

I thank you.