



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
15 November 2023

Original: English

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## Preparatory Committee for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 13 September 2023 and  
5–8 February and 29 April–1 May 2024

### Gaborone outcome document

#### Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the members of the Preparatory Committee for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries the outcome document of the high-level Africa regional review meeting on the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, entitled “Gaborone outcome document”, annexed to the present note.



## Annex

### Gaborone outcome document

#### Introduction

1. We, the Ministers and representatives of landlocked developing countries, gathered in Gaborone on 29 and 30 May 2023 for the high-level Africa regional review meeting in preparation for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in 2024, to undertake a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 in the Africa region, including identification of achievements, gaps, constraints, emerging challenges and opportunities, sharing of best practices, experiences and innovative approaches for accelerated post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recovery and achieving sustainable development in landlocked developing countries, and identification of appropriate policy measures and concrete action-oriented recommendations at the national, regional and global levels necessary for making the successor programme of action for landlocked developing countries a truly transformative one, especially in contributing to the acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in African landlocked developing countries.

2. We welcome the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations agencies, international, regional and subregional organizations and the private sector.

3. We reaffirm the global commitments to addressing the special needs of the landlocked developing countries made at major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, and our commitment to the goals and aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063.

4. We welcome with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Rwanda to host the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Kigali.

#### Assessment of progress

5. We note with great concern the fragile and highly uncertain global socioeconomic outlook, persisting negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and current multiple crises, which increase pressure on inflation, energy and food prices, finance, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, constraining the ability of landlocked developing countries to achieve the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. We note that landlocked developing countries' existing transport-related vulnerabilities were exacerbated further during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19-related trade and transit restrictions resulted in high costs and supply chain disruptions and increased transportation times. As a result, landlocked developing countries' exports fell drastically, at a rate higher than the global average.

7. We note that, since the launch of the Vienna Programme of Action, some progress has been made to close missing links and expand transport infrastructure in the African landlocked developing countries. However, despite the progress, road and rail transit transport networks remain largely constrained both in quality and in quantity owing to the high scale of investment needed for infrastructure development and maintenance, inadequate skilled human resources and new technologies.

8. We note that, over the review period, several African countries, including some landlocked developing countries, have either built new airports or rehabilitated several old ones. In addition, the African Union launched the Single African Air Transport Market, in January 2018, which seeks to fully liberalize market access to intra-African air transport services. Air carrier departures from the African landlocked developing countries had increased by 15.6 per cent between 2014 and 2017. However, we note that the air transport industry was hard hit by COVID-19 and landlocked developing countries still have not been able to fully recover from this. Improving and harmonizing the air transport industry in those countries will require massive investments to expand and modernize infrastructure, increase use of digital technologies and to rehabilitate and replace aged fleets.

9. We note that access to information and communications technologies in landlocked developing countries has increased over the review period. African landlocked developing countries have witnessed a significant increase in mobile cellular subscriptions, which grew by 65 per cent from 9.3 million in 2014 to 15.3 million in 2021. The use of the Internet in Africa increased from 27 per cent in 2019 to 33 per cent in 2021, while in the landlocked developing countries the number of Internet users increased from 29 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2021. We underscore that, although this represents a significant improvement, it is still far below the world average of 63 per cent.

10. We recognize that African landlocked developing countries continue to face major constraints in fully harnessing the benefits of the digital economy, including infrastructural gaps, the relatively high cost of information and communications technology services, in particular broadband services, low digital literacy rates, poor quality regulation and the high cost of accessing submarine cables. It is critical that the high costs of broadband in African landlocked developing countries are reduced.

11. We note that infrastructure in landlocked developing countries for production, transmission and distribution of modern and renewable energy services has been expanded and upgraded, but more than 60 per cent of the African landlocked developing countries' population still does not have access to electricity and the rural-urban supply gap remains significant. However, the development of energy infrastructure, including for renewable energy, is largely constrained by lack of funding and the pace of completion of power projects remains slow.

12. We recognize that participation of landlocked developing countries in regional and subregional trade, transport and transit facilitation agreements and initiatives aimed at deepening regional integration, enhancing infrastructure connectivity and facilitating movement of cargo across borders has increased.

13. We remain concerned that implementation of agreements and initiatives that promote trade facilitation such as the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the revised Kyoto Convention, the TIR Convention and other relevant international conventions remains low and has been negatively impacted by measures introduced by transit countries and landlocked developing countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

14. We note that, during the implementation period of the Vienna Programme of Action, the African Continental Free Trade Area was established and entered into

force on 30 May 2019, to further deepen regional integration, and also note that all African landlocked developing countries have ratified the agreement. The agreement is envisioned to result in reduced tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff barriers and, more importantly, is expected to ease trade facilitation hurdles among the African landlocked developing countries, since it contains provisions on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation. Furthermore, African countries that have ratified the agreement have consented to liberalize up to 97 per cent of tariff lines on intra-African trade in 15 years' time.

15. We note that African landlocked developing countries' quest to deepen regional integration has been severely constrained by lack of capacity, especially in implementing ratified trading protocols, supply-side constraints, lack of complementarity of goods, multiple membership, macroeconomic instability and shortage of key infrastructures such as transport, water and energy.

16. We express concern at the continued marginalization of African landlocked developing countries in global trade. Those countries' share of merchandise exports in global exports has remained low over the review period at 0.24 per cent in 2021, that is, a drop of 0.01 per cent since the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action in 2014. We are further concerned that merchandise exports from African landlocked developing countries remained undiversified and largely comprise primary commodities.

17. We recognize that the importance of services in the global and national economy has been increasing. However, the African landlocked developing countries' share of exports of services to the global share of exports in services remained marginal at 2 per cent for five straight years, that is, from 2014 to 2019, and then dropped marginally to 1.6 per cent and 1.7 per cent in 2020 and 2021, respectively. The tourism sector, which is one of the main contributors to landlocked developing countries' services export revenue was hardest hit by COVID-19 and the recovery has been slow.

18. We recognize that, over the review period, progress on structural transformation by African landlocked developing countries has been slow, owing to low investment flows and subdued local investors, which has undermined efforts towards value addition, technology and innovation. We also observe that over 90 per cent of exports from African landlocked developing countries have remained largely concentrated in raw materials and the contribution of those countries to global trade remained flat at around 0.2 per cent.

19. We note that, during the review period, the landlocked developing countries have been adversely affected by climate change, the increasing frequency and intensity as well as the number and scale of disasters and their devastating impacts, which have resulted in massive loss of life, food insecurity and famine, biodiversity loss, water-related challenges, decline in forest area as a proportion of total land area, displacement, humanitarian and development needs and long-term negative economic, social and environmental consequences, especially for those in vulnerable situations throughout the world, including landlocked developing countries, undermining the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of its Sustainable Development Goals.

20. We note that total external financial resources received by African landlocked developing countries from official development assistance, foreign direct investment and remittances show an upward trajectory from the year 2014, when the Vienna Programme of Action was launched. In 2021, a total of \$7.3 billion in foreign direct investment was received, a real increase of 3 per cent since the Vienna Programme of Action was launched. This amounted to 0.45 per cent of total global foreign direct

investment inflows. Official development assistance has been demonstrated to be a major source of capital to African landlocked developing countries.

21. We also note that, since the launch of the Vienna Programme of Action, foreign direct investment in African landlocked developing countries has maintained an upward trend except for the year 2020, when foreign direct investment inflows dropped to \$4.9 billion owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

22. We note that, while African landlocked developing countries received \$21.5 billion in official development assistance in 2020, a real increase of 34.3 per cent since the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action, such assistance was unevenly distributed among them, and the trend has not been adequate to support a long-term recovery and provide impetus to landlocked developing countries' key development goals.

23. We note that, in 2022, the African landlocked developing countries received \$8.7 billion in remittances, which was \$1.7 billion more than was received by the group in 2014.

24. We also note that, during the period under review, official development assistance has remained a major source of capital to African landlocked developing countries, in comparison to the reported figures related to foreign direct investment and diaspora remittances.

### **Call for action**

25. We note that the world has changed drastically since the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action in 2014 and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Without immediate course correction and acceleration of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the landlocked developing countries are destined to face prolonged periods of crisis and uncertainty. We commit to implement the calls to action in the present outcome document, at the national, regional and global levels and to accelerate progress on agreed policies, programmes and investments, while acknowledging that some of the calls to action will require capacity-building and technical and financial assistance in order to be effectively implemented by landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries.

26. We note that transport corridors are the backbone of transportation networks, linking major gateways and hubs, and are an important means of enhancing landlocked developing countries' connectivity to markets, achieving efficient transit and reducing those countries' transport costs. We call on transit countries and development partners to provide effective and efficient transit transport corridors with good and well-maintained transport infrastructure, and smooth implementation of agreed legal frameworks, transit rules policies, safety and security measures, and transport and trade facilitation measures. We call for the promotion of railway transport interconnected with road transport and ports for more efficiency and to contribute directly to the decarbonization of transport. We further call for the promotion of interoperable regional transport networks and multimodal transport systems.

27. We note that the magnitude of the resources required to invest in transport infrastructure development and maintenance remains a major challenge. We call for enhanced international, regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation on infrastructure projects, the allocation of more resources from national budgets and the effective deployment of international development assistance and multilateral financing in the development and maintenance of infrastructure.

28. We call on international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and development partners to consider infrastructure funding windows that will provide preferential funding to landlocked developing countries on the continent.
29. We underscore the importance of capacity-building in designing bankable projects and call on the United Nations system, development partners, multilateral development banks, and international and regional organizations to provide capacity-building support to landlocked developing countries and transit countries on transport infrastructure development.
30. We call on the landlocked developing countries, assisted by the African Union Development Agency and regional economic communities, to prioritize projects that have greater impact on connectivity and digital innovations, that would translate to the economic development of landlocked developing countries and other African States. We urge landlocked developing countries to accelerate preparation of projects to bankability in order to scale up investment and ensure that there is a pipeline of bankable priority infrastructure projects for investment with a focus on smart projects that impact more on economic transformation.
31. We also call for the establishment of additional and bigger project preparation facilities on the continent that will support both the project preparation and capital investment for the development of a pipeline of transport infrastructure projects to improve the connectivity of the landlocked developing countries.
32. We call for increased investment in rail infrastructure as it offers lower transit costs and shorter travel times than road transport.
33. We call for increased investments to improve air transport connectivity. We call upon the international community, including the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, to provide support towards the recovery of the air transport industry, which is faster and offers landlocked developing countries direct access to international markets.
34. We call for further liberalization of the skies through the full operationalization of the Yamoussoukro Decision within the framework of the Single African Air Transport Market, in order to allow landlocked developing countries to grow their networks within Africa and beyond.
35. We encourage development partners, multilateral financial and development institutions and regional banks and the private sector to support landlocked developing countries and transit countries to collaborate to establish information and communications technology infrastructure, applications and services.
36. We encourage landlocked developing countries to create an enabling environment for research and development, and the development of viable strategies that could result in further competitiveness, investment and rapid reductions in the cost of information and communications technologies. We urge all relevant stakeholders to address the growing digital divides between and within countries through, inter alia, strengthened enabling policy environments at all levels, legal and regulatory frameworks conducive to increased investment and innovation, public-private partnerships, universal access strategies and international cooperation to improve affordability, education, capacity-building, investment and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.
37. We also encourage African landlocked developing countries to develop new policies related to digital identity, data security and data privacy, among others, with a view to benefiting from the digital economies, especially through digital trade, including leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area Protocol on Digital Trade.

38. We further encourage landlocked developing countries to enhance their efforts to integrate into e-commerce. In this regard, we urge international partners to provide capacity-building to assist landlocked developing countries in addressing gaps in legal and regulatory frameworks and developing digital skills.

39. We encourage African landlocked developing countries to engage in all discussions that will shape international rules and regulations of e-commerce and the digital economy.

40. We also call upon the United Nations system, in particular the Economic Commission for Africa, working in collaboration with Afrexim Bank and the African Development Bank to expedite efforts to support the development of digital trade on the African continent to accelerate the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

41. We encourage landlocked developing countries to provide mechanisms to facilitate the deployment of networks and services in non-profitable areas for operators, whether public investment, public-private scheme, or other types of incentives. We call on development partners, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations to provide capacity-building support to landlocked developing countries to improve the business environment and the ability to attract and retain the private sector in information and communications technology.

42. We recognize that investments in renewable energy present massive opportunities for African landlocked developing countries and we encourage landlocked developing countries and transit countries to create an enabling environment for energy investment and infrastructure operations.

43. We call upon the international community, including regional and international development banks, bilateral donors, the United Nations system, the International Renewable Energy Agency and other relevant stakeholders to scale up investments and technical support to promote renewable energy on a wider scale in landlocked developing countries in order to overcome rural-urban and gender disparities and increase overall access to clean cooking fuels and electricity. In particular, landlocked developing countries should be supported to strengthen their capacities for planning, implementing and monitoring renewable energy policies and for developing bankable projects in order for them to take full advantage of climate funding for energy projects. African landlocked developing countries also need support to increase investments in improving energy efficiency.

44. We encourage regional organizations to develop regional policies and implementation processes that facilitate cross-border energy cooperation, and we also encourage regional utility organizations such as power pools in partnership with regional development banks to scale up investments in regional power generation and transmission projects to ensure that cross-border electricity interconnections are available, uninterrupted, reliable and cost-efficient.

45. We encourage African landlocked developing countries to intensify the implementation of rural electrification programmes to promote universal access to electricity that are funded through public-private partnerships and national fiscal mechanisms. We note the need to scale up initiatives such as the light-up Africa initiative.

46. We call upon landlocked developing countries, transit countries and their trading partners to further enhance implementation of their obligations under all relevant international, regional and bilateral agreements to improve transit in a manner consistent with their trade and development objectives and we call on development partners, the private sector and relevant international, regional and subregional

organizations to enhance support to landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries to implement these agreements.

47. We recognize the need for innovative approaches to treat in a holistic manner the issues of transit, transport and trade facilitation and call on the international community to support landlocked developing countries to address the limitations arising from the rising transport and logistical costs that are hampering their effective participation in regional value chains using their comparative advantages.

48. We further call on the international community to support landlocked developing countries and transit countries with the implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, giving special consideration to the areas identified by landlocked developing countries as requiring assistance, including human resources and training, legislative and regulatory framework, information and communications technology and infrastructure and equipment, enhanced freedom of transit, fees, and formalities, border crossing cooperation and technical cooperation.

49. We call upon the members of the World Trade Organization to strongly commit to addressing the marginalization of landlocked developing countries in international trade and to improve their effective and equitable participation in the multilateral trading system. We further call for enhanced market access, including through addressing non-tariff barriers in key markets for landlocked developing countries, addressing tariff escalations, and the elimination of trade barriers that are inconsistent with World Trade Organization agreements. We also call for enhanced support to landlocked developing countries to meet international standards, as well as to benefit from World Trade Organization agreements.

50. We welcome the operationalization of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and note that its success hinges on improved financial integration, trade facilitation, conducive trade policies, regulations and mechanisms as well as reliable and resilient infrastructure.

51. We affirm our determination to target diversification of landlocked developing countries' economies as a key part of our development strategies, including through the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. In this context, there is also a need to step up investments in sustainable recovery to enhance growth, create decent jobs and accelerate intraregional trade through the effective implementation of the Free Trade Area.

52. We call on landlocked developing countries to make efforts to accelerate deeper market integration at the regional and continental levels by effectively implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area, as this paves the way for greater facilitation of movement of goods and services as well as people across the regional blocs and ultimately the continent, given that the key tenets of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation are embedded in market integration provisions, with African landlocked developing countries being the key beneficiaries. We call on landlocked developing countries to implement policy measures aimed at building productive capacity as this is key in fostering intra-African trade, stimulating much-needed manufacturing and economic development.

53. We encourage landlocked developing countries to continue to formulate policies and strategies aimed at diversifying their export structure and adding value to their exports in order to expand their participation in sustainable regional and global value chains.

54. We encourage landlocked developing countries, with the support of United Nations agencies and development partners, to strengthen their services sector by adopting enabling policies and a conducive business environment needed to strengthen and improve the resilience and sustainability of the services sector.



55. We call on the international community to support the landlocked developing countries to advance structural economic transformation with a view to building productive capacity, focusing on increasing value addition in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, further integrating those countries into global and regional value chains, encouraging economic and export diversification and promoting formal and decent employment.

56. We underscore the need to establish policies that place emphasis on global value chains and regional value chains, which are key in providing opportunities for firms to absorb new technologies and rapidly expand their economies of scale, access international markets and therefore facilitate structural economic transformation.

57. We urge development partners, including the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and other relevant United Nations entities to provide technical assistance to address the critical success factors for the development of regional value chains and global value chains such as: technological upgrading; creation of an appropriate enabling environment by the States; stable macroeconomic environment, robust financial markets and banking systems; provision of information and communications technology and energy as key enablers of industrialization; and removal of key binding constraints (mainly provision of skills, finance and infrastructure).

58. We invite African landlocked developing countries, with the support of regional economic communities, to address the barriers to international trade in services so as to harness the development potential of their economies, which is key in improving economic performance and can provide a range of traditional and new export opportunities vital for structural transformation.

59. We encourage the use of special economic zones in African landlocked developing countries as a vehicle for industrialization and to leverage on the opportunities coming with the African Continental Free Trade Area, and call on development partners such as regional economic communities, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Development Bank to collaborate with African landlocked developing countries in the establishment of special economic zones.

60. We note with concern that, during the implementation period of the Vienna Programme of Action, African landlocked developing countries were hit by several climate-induced disasters including heatwaves, cyclones, floods and droughts and that these events, besides the tragic loss of life and displacement of population that they cause, also weaken infrastructure (including rail, roads, hydropower plants, homes, schools and public buildings), and impose a direct cost on transit trade, which consequently puts constraints on the African landlocked developing countries' capacity to compete on the global market. We also note with great concern that landlocked developing countries suffered disproportionately high human and economic losses from these disasters and acknowledge the compounded socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

61. We reaffirm our commitment to address climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities and national circumstances and we call on Member States, as well as relevant regional and international organizations, to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts and strengthening resilience in African landlocked developing countries.

62. We urge developed country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to fully deliver on the goal of 100 billion United States dollars urgently and through to 2025 and emphasize the importance of transparency in the implementation of their pledges. We welcome the outcomes of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, including the decision on funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage.

63. We agree on the need to consolidate our positions in the discussions on climate change and formalize our Group of Landlocked Developing Countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, in order to enhance our coordination, project a strong voice and work with relevant stakeholders to advance the interests of landlocked developing countries in climate-related issues, especially with regard to vulnerability, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and we call on the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its twenty-eighth session, to be held in the United Arab Emirates in November 2023, to consider the impact of climate change on landlocked developing countries in the deliberations and outcome.

64. We welcome the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, held on 18 and 19 May 2023 in New York, and recognize the urgency of implementing the Sendai Framework as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, including the calls to action contained in the political declaration of the high-level meeting. We acknowledge the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction policies and strategies in the follow-up framework to the Vienna Programme of Action across crucial economic, environmental, development and climate aspects, in alignment with the Sendai Framework and the political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework.

65. We acknowledge the need to urgently undertake necessary measures to improve resilience-building in landlocked developing countries, embed disaster risk reduction, scale up investments for structural economic transformation and strengthen the means of implementation, such as access to disaster data, technology transfer and capacity development. We further acknowledge that financing for disaster risk reduction presents a considerable challenge to the implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in the landlocked developing countries and call for all public and private, domestic and international investment, as well as bilateral and multilateral support, to be risk-informed and aligned with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, including understanding of risk through risk analytics and multi-hazard early warning systems.

66. We encourage partnerships to strengthen the understanding of climate risk and, more broadly, systemic risk and its application in decision-making in the landlocked developing countries, including through disaster risk reduction education, comprehensive risk management, building academic and scientific capacity, utilization of frontier technologies, and supporting traditional, Indigenous and local knowledge and practices.

67. We invite climate finance providers to improve access for landlocked developing countries and encourage the allocation of more resources to ex-ante instruments for building resilience, including new financing approaches which incentivize disaster risk reduction and sustainable reduction of landlocked developing countries' vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters.

68. We recognize that domestic resource mobilization is key to achieving the Vienna Programme of Action, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. However, this is being seriously impacted by the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises, including geopolitical tensions. We commit

to enhancing efforts towards taxation, savings and financial inclusion, with a view to enhancing self-reliance and reducing inequalities. We stress the importance of ensuring conducive policy and regulatory frameworks and transparency, both in the national and global contexts, including for financial institutions, development banks and other relevant agencies in this respect.

69. We reiterate the need to strengthen international cooperation on tax matters and welcome the recent adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on the promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation. We look forward to the beginning of intergovernmental discussions in New York at United Nations Headquarters on ways to strengthen the inclusiveness and effectiveness of international tax cooperation through the evaluation of additional options, including the possibility of developing an international tax cooperation framework or instrument through a United Nations intergovernmental process, taking into full consideration existing international and multilateral arrangements.

70. We reiterate our call on donor countries to fulfil their official development assistance commitments and provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to the developing countries by 2030, with particular focus on landlocked developing countries. We also call upon them to ensure quality and effectiveness of aid, especially through predictability and accountability in alignment with the national priorities of the recipient countries. We call upon the development partners to provide enhanced financial and technical support to the landlocked developing countries, in line with their national priorities, including for impactful projects and capacity-building.

71. We call upon development partners to support the implementation of integrated national financing frameworks, such as blended finance, public-private partnerships, and impact investments, to mobilize resources for sustainable infrastructure development and diversification of the economies of African landlocked developing countries.

72. We call for new financial instruments that harness the potential of digital innovations for the financing of the Sustainable Development Goals, including digital financing platforms, innovative digital services, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises digitization and domestic resource mobilization. We also call for a dedicated financing mechanism that delivers catalytic investment capital for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and small investment projects in African landlocked developing countries to mobilize sustainable private investments that advance the Goals and act as a crisis facility to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises, as well as support resilience-building for future shocks and crises.

73. We underscore the need to enhance access to affordable and long-term financing for African landlocked developing countries by strengthening cooperation with international financial institutions, regional development banks and private sector investors.

74. We further reiterate the need for strengthening financial inclusion and capacity-building initiatives to improve financial literacy and promote entrepreneurship in African landlocked developing countries.

75. We commit to redouble efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion and corruption through strengthened national regulation and increased international cooperation, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the strengthening of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows. We reiterate our call for enhanced global partnership and collaboration for adopting measures to prevent the

transfer of stolen assets abroad, recover and return stolen assets, and identify good practices for the return of stolen assets.

76. We are concerned that the external debt stock and debt service of many African landlocked developing countries has drastically increased, resulting in three African landlocked developing countries being in debt distress as of February 2023 and an additional four such African countries at high risk of debt distress. We acknowledge the efforts of the global community to deal with the evolving debt crisis, including the Group of 20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments, but recognize its limitations in terms of scope and participation of creditors to bring about a lasting solution to the debt issues. We call upon development partners to take effective measures to reduce unsustainable debt levels owed by African landlocked developing countries, including through debt cancellation and restructuring of existing high debt.

77. We call for improved debt management and responsible lending and borrowing, including by providing financing on more concessional terms by official creditors and ensuring that lending practices are fully in line with sustainable financing practices. We call on bilateral and multilateral development partners to use new instruments like debt swaps and State-contingent lending, taking into account risks beyond the control of landlocked developing countries like conflicts, natural hazards and climate risks. We also call for technical assistance and capacity-building for landlocked developing countries to strengthen their debt management.

78. We call upon development partners, multilateral development banks and the International Monetary Fund to introduce new and comprehensive debt relief initiatives for African landlocked developing countries. We also call upon creditors, both public and private, for additional effective measures to facilitate financing of our economic development, including access to grants and concessional resources for investment in critically needed infrastructure and development projects to avoid further indebtedness. We also call upon them to take into consideration the structural constraints and longer-term investment requirements of the landlocked developing countries for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

79. We call for the reform of the international financial architecture to allow African countries, including landlocked developing countries, to gain access to resources more easily and at a lower cost from multilateral and regional financial institutions.

80. We welcome the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus launched by the Secretary-General to address both short-term urgencies and the need for long-term sustainable development finance, through a significant increase in financing for sustainable development, to the tune of at least US\$500 billion per year, to be delivered through a combination of concessional and non-concessional finance.

81. We welcome the continued support provided to landlocked developing countries by the Economic Commission for Africa, working with other key regional partners, in the efforts to realize sustainable, inclusive development and ultimately to meet the priorities of the next programme of action. We urge them to enhance support towards the achievement of the development agenda of African landlocked developing countries, through development planning, macroeconomic policy and economic governance, and public finance.

82. We request the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in close cooperation and coordination with the relevant United Nations system and other international organizations and United Nations resident coordinators to extend the necessary support to the landlocked developing countries in the implementation of the new programme of action in coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and building on the achievements and lessons learned from the Vienna

Programme of Action and other development frameworks, through raising global awareness, mobilizing international support and resources in favour of the landlocked developing countries, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and reaching out to all stakeholders, including by establishing partnerships with civil society and the private sector, to enhance support for those countries. In this regard, we strongly urge the Secretary-General and the Member States to strengthen the Office of the High Representative to enable it to provide substantive support to landlocked developing countries in their pursuit of meaningfully engaging in the intergovernmental discussions and implementing the programme of action for landlocked developing countries and the 2030 Agenda.

83. We stand ready to partner with all relevant stakeholders to work towards addressing the interlinked challenges faced by landlocked developing countries. The preparatory process of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, and other major events to be held in the course of the year, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development and COP 28, present us with opportunities to work towards a transformative successor programme of action to the Vienna Programme of Action, as it is in our mutual interest to do so.

84. We note the importance of mainstreaming new priorities into national development and call on the Office of the High Representative to conduct training on mainstreaming of the new programme of action for landlocked developing countries at the national level.

85. We stress the need for a robust follow-up and review mechanism on the implementation of the new programme of action that will monitor and track implementation and achievement of goals and call on the Office of the High Representative to support these efforts.

86. We call upon all States Members of the United Nations, and members of specialized agencies, in particular landlocked and transit developing countries and donor countries, as well as of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in the Conference, at the highest possible level.

87. We submit this outcome document to the session of the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee as an input to the outcome document of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries.

### **Vote of thanks**

88. We express our profound gratitude to the people and the Government of Botswana for organizing and hosting this meeting. We also express appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Botswana in its dual capacity as the Global Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and Coordinator for trade and development issues of the Group in Geneva.

89. We express gratitude for the substantive and organizational support of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Botswana.

90. We note with appreciation the active participation and substantive contributions of the landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, development partners, United Nations system organizations, multilateral and regional development banks, other international and regional organizations, development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders.