

Statement by  
H.E. Mr. Thongphane SAVANPHET, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Lao PDR  
at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers  
of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

*Building Momentum towards Gaborone:  
Partnering for a Decade of Action and Transformation in LLDCs*  
26 September 2024

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Mr. Chair,  
Excellencies,

1. At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Botswana for your able stewardship as Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). My delegation looks forward to the successful convening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in December 2024 in Botswana.
2. Over the past decade, we have made notable progress in implementing the Vienna Program of Action, especially in infrastructure improvements increased access to quality transportation services, enhanced regional and sub-regional integration and connectivity, improved trade facilitation, and continued international cooperation. However, it remains evident that many LLDCs continue to encounter persistent structural and geographical vulnerabilities, exacerbated by elevated inflation and interest rates, global economic turmoil, supply chain disruptions, and rising food and fuel costs, all of which have hindered the development progress in many LLDCs.
3. We believe that the adoption of the new Programme of Action represents a critical turning point, not just for LLDCs, but the international community as a whole as it charts out a future direction for our Group in the next decade. Since LLDCs continue to face a myriad of formidable challenges, the new Program brings about new hope and opportunity for LLDCs and the international community to join hands in addressing the most pressing needs and challenges.
4. On this note, we are of the view that this transformative, yet achievable Program of Action must be fully implemented in an effective and timely manner not only by LLDCs, but also by transit countries, development partners, trading partners, and international financial institutions through genuine partnerships.

5. In this light, we call upon international financial institutions to reevaluate their existing financing mechanisms, noting the essence that they develop more accessible and sustainable financing solutions specifically tailored to meet the specific needs of LLDCs. This will not only provide the necessary resources but also empower LLDCs to foster their sustainable development and resilient infrastructure.

Mr. Chair,

6. At the national level, the Lao PDR is committed to integrating the priority areas of the new Program of Action into our national and sectoral development plans. One of our most notable achievements has been the enhancement of our infrastructure linkages. This includes the successful construction of bridges, highways, and railways, which have not only improved connectivity and people-to-people contact but have also strengthened our capacity to engage in regional trade and cooperation. Moreover, substantial investments have been made in developing dry ports and logistics parks which are critical components for effective trade facilitation. Over the past few years, these infrastructure advancements have further enhanced our trade potential and made significant contribution to promoting regional economic integration and connectivity.
7. In this context, we reaffirm our unwavering determination to actively engage in sub-regional, regional, and international cooperation and integration initiatives. As a least developed and landlocked developing country, particularly the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia, the Lao PDR is committed to transforming from a landlocked into a land-linked nation, positioning itself as a vital transportation hub for goods and services across the sub-region.

Mr. Chair,

8. To conclude, I wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Government of Botswana for generously hosting the upcoming LLDC3 Conference. We stand ready to engage with all partners in this important Conference to collectively advance the shared aspiration of LLDCs and to ensure future growth, resilience, and sustainable development.

Thank You.