1
As delivered

UN-OHRLLS

Welcome Remarks
by
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Under-Secretary-General and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing
Countries and Small Island Developing States

at the

International Forum on Landlock覂刈�ఀnter�쀀ऀa�d�

2
His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Aripov, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Uzbekistan,
Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture
Organization,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I thank the Government of Uzbekistan for convening this timely
and important International Forum on “Landlocked Developing
Countries’ Food Security and the Sustainable Development
Goals”.

I am delighted to be here and for this opportunity to build on the
dialogue and cooperation initiated by the Samarkand
Declaration on Food Security in 2023. I take this opportunity to
congratulate Uzbekistan for the remarkable achievements made
to ensure food security.

I further welcome this opportunity to deliver upon the call for
action issued by the FAO High-Level Ministerial Event on
“Transforming Agrifood Systems to Increase Resilience and

3
Achieve the 2030 Agenda: Harnessing the potential of SIDS, LDCs
and LLDCs” in June last year.

I thank FAO for keeping the priorities of the most vulnerable
countries high on the agenda, as the UN’s High Representative
for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, it is a pleasure to work with DG Qu and
his team.

Allow me to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for
the warm welcome and excellent hospitality extended to us in
this beautiful and historic city of Tashkent.

Our gathering in this city provides a unique perspective to
reflect on the challenges of being landlocked.

6

This is particularly concerning for many LLDCs that rely heavily
on food imports. In 15 LLDCs, imports account for more than a
third of all available wheat, rice and maize supplies.

Excellencies,

The year 2024 is pivotal for the LLDCs.

From 10-13 December, the third United Nations Conference on
LLDCs will take place in Gaborone, Botswana.
This once-in-a decade conference is dedicated to addressing the
development challenges of LLDCs, offering an unparalleled
opportunity to rally global support.

The new Programme of Action for the LLDCs, to be launched at
LLDC3, will serve as a guiding framework for the UN system over
the next decade.

Allow me to highlight some of the significant actions in the POA
to support the agri-food systems and food security as critical
enablers to achieve the SDGs.

First: the POA calls for the establishment of regional agriculture
research hubs for LLDCs.

7

These hubs aim to harness cutting-edge solutions to enhance
agricultural productivity, promote value addition, support
capacity building, and improve agricultural practices.

The administrative modalities for these hubs are to be
considered by the Secretary-General and proposed to the next
session of the UN General Assembly. We envisage FAO taking a
leading role in this regard.

Second: the POA includes, for the first time, a dedicated priority
area on climate change, resilience building and reducing
vulnerability to climate change and disasters in LLDCs.

This includes support for the implementation of adaptation
projects in LLDCs, development of climate-resilient
infrastructure, multi-hazard early warning systems, and
resilience-building measures.

More and better adaptation finance is also called for to respond
to distinct disaster-related challenges.

9
Furthermore, the POA has placed

10
To this end, the POA has identified a dedicated Investment
Finance Facility as a concrete deliverable for the LLDCs’
infrastructure financing needs.

Robust transport infrastructure and enhanced connectivity play
a crucial role in strengthening the resilience of food supply
chains, reducing food waste, and ensuring market stability.

Fifth: the new POA has called on the UN Secretary General to
establish a High-Level Panel on Freedom of Transit.

On average, LLDCs spend nearly two times more for the payment
of transit, transport and insurance services than the average for
developing countries, and three times more than the average of
developed economies.

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11
Finally: the POA recognizes that gender gaps persist across all
sectors, including agriculture.

Women make up a significant portion of the agricultural
workforce, but often face limited access to productive resources,
training and tools.

Raising women’s access to productive resources to the same
level as men can increase farm yields by 20-30 percent.

We, therefore, need a gender-sensitive approach for inclusive
agriculture development in LLDCs, ensuring equal access to
resources such as land, credit, and technology for both men and
women. This will require inclusive policies and targeted training
and development programmes. Addressing social and cultural
barriers that restrict women’s equal participation is also crucial.

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by reiterating that the LLDC3 Conference in
December gives us a once-in-a-decade opportunity to shape the
sustainable development of the LLDCs.

12
I look forward to our discussions today, and your valuable inputs
to the upcoming UN Conference on the LLDCs and the delivery of
the new Programme of Action.

The theme of the Conference is “Driving Progress through
Partnerships”, and I count on your partnership and support to
advance the LLDC agenda globally. And I hope that you will
ensure that by your participation at the Conference at the
highest political level.

I thank you once again, Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, for brining
us together in the lead up to the LLDC3 Conference. Uzbekistan
and this region have so much to share ad bring to the Conference
on valuable experiences on food security and sustainable
development for the benefit of all LLDCs and partners.

I look forward to welcoming you all in Gaborone, Botswana, in
December.

I thank you.