Republic of Botswana

STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PR OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF

THE GROUP OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCs)

DURING

THEMATIC CLUSTER 2: ACCELERATING THE SDGS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND BUILDING TRUST” DURING

CONSULTATIONS AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ENTITLED “OUR COMMON AGENDA”

14 FEBRUARY 2022
General Assembly Hall

Please check against delivery
Mr. President,
Excellencies,

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

2. We thank you, Mr. President, for convening these very important discussions in an open and transparent manner.

3. We thank also the Secretary-General again, for his commitment and mostly for sharing his vision for our future.

4. On Cluster 2 under the theme: “Accelerating the SDGs through sustainable financing and building trust”, the LLDCs wish to make the following observations.

Mr. President,

5. The LLDCs believe that enhancing public trust, through increasing access to basic services, transparency and freedom of information will be paramount for accelerating progress towards the SDGs. We therefore support the proposal to initiate and enhance national listening and ‘envisioning the future’ exercises.

6. However, we cannot overemphasize the fact that considering their geography, dispersed populations and weak digital infrastructure, LLDCs run the risk of being left behind and never listened to nor heard. We therefore, urge the Secretary-General while supporting theses
“listening exercises”; to consider in particular the needs of our countries including assistance towards the development of digital infrastructure and enhancing access to affordable internet.

Mr. President,

7. We take note of the Secretary-General’s announcement on his commitment to support the development of the rule of law and tackling corruption. Towards this end, we believe that there is a high need for support and capacity building to facilitate automation and digitalization of public services for countries in special situations, in order to boost transparency and accountability.

8. With regards to the issues of international taxation and countering illicit financial flows, we call on the Secretary-General to consider including measures that support LLDCs to build policy oriented anti-corruption and anti-money laundering solutions.

9. We further support calls to promote integrity in public information and governance of the digital space. In this regard, vulnerable economies including LLDCs, which are not yet well integrated in digital platforms, should be given an equal voice during deliberations on new policies.

10. We commend calls to develop policies to prevent harm in the digital or technology spaces, including in relation to freedom of speech, hate speech and harassment, privacy, the “right to be forgotten”, neurotechnology and in particular, universalizing the access to internet as a basic human right.
11. We are in agreement with the proposal to complement GDP with other relevant indicators. For LLDCs, it is crucial that any such complement indicators capture their disadvantages due to the geography, disproportionate trade and transit costs and vulnerability to crises.

**Mr. President,**

12. While we support the Biennial Summit proposed in paragraph 73; we stress that any such future Summit should be inclusive and give special recognition to the financing needs of vulnerable economies, including LLDCs, whose challenges have been further amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. On the call for stronger global cooperation to promote financial integrity by addressing endemic tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, we urge that mechanisms be developed to share tax revenues fairly from digital Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) that have users in developing economies, including LLDCs, despite not being based there.

14. We commend the call for changing global business models to better connect businesses, markets and societies. We in this regard, urge global cooperation to avoid a race to the bottom - in terms of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) standards in pursuit of investment. We also urge the international community to better support vulnerable economies, including LLDCs in terms of transfer of technology that could lead to more sustainable business models.
Mr. President,

15. **In Conclusion**, as the LLDCs; we reiterate our full commitment to supporting the United Nations system make better use of available resources, and support the proposal for repurposing existing funds and adopting less rigid budgetary procedures. We look forward to learning more about proposals on how the United Nations system will also explore ways to better harmonize budgeting and funding requests, ensuring that the different executive boards of agencies, funds and programmes work together and collaborate better.

I thank you for your attention.