



**Third United Nations  
Conference on  
Landlocked Developing  
Countries**

# **Civil Society Forum**

**4-5 August 2025**

**Awaza, Turkmenistan**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

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## Background

The LLDC3 Civil Society Forum (4–5 August 2025), taking place alongside the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Awaza, Turkmenistan (5–8 August 2025), is a unique opportunity for civil society from around the world to engage directly with world leaders, UN officials, and key stakeholders to share experiences, propose solutions, and shape the sustainable development agenda toward achieving the Awaza Programme of Action for LLDCs.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, LLDCs faced mixed progress toward sustainable development. The pandemic amplified their structural vulnerabilities, reversing gains under the Vienna Programme of Action and Agenda 2030. LLDCs remain highly exposed to external shocks, with macroeconomic instability compounding their challenges.

Civil society is pivotal in driving sustainable development, offering innovative solutions and grassroots insights critical for LLDCs' resilience and prosperity. A multi-stakeholder approach — as requested by Member States — is essential to conduct a comprehensive review and galvanize broad support for a new generation of action. Civil society also plays a key role in bringing LLDC priorities into global policy discussions on finance, trade, climate, and beyond.

From local organizations to international networks, civil society actors are central to the development and implementation of national strategies, ensuring policies are rooted in the realities of people's lives. The success of the Awaza Programme of Action for LLDCs will rely on their active participation, alongside governments and the private sector.

## Forum Objectives

- **Provide a platform** for civil society, academia, the private sector, and government to identify critical priorities, forge partnerships, and chart a way forward.
- **Showcase successful partnerships and strategies** that drive sustainable development in LLDCs.
- **Facilitate the exchange of innovative solutions**, best practices, and lessons learned in addressing LLDC-specific challenges.

## Draft Forum Format

### Monday, 4 August

#### **11:00–13:00 | High-Level Opening**

The first-ever Civil Society Forum at an LLDC Conference opens with high-level remarks from the Government of Turkmenistan, civil society and UN leadership.

The opening will underscore the indispensable role of civil society in advancing the Awaza Programme of Action for LLDCs — from driving structural transformation and climate resilience to fostering inclusive innovation and partnerships.

A panel discussion will follow, sharing civil society perspectives and setting the tone for the days ahead.

#### **15:00–18:00 | Plenary 1: People-Centered Structural Transformation and Environmental Sustainability**

This session will explore how LLDCs, through a civil society lens, can achieve inclusive and sustainable growth through economic diversification and environmental stewardship.

With over half of the land in LLDCs classified as dryland and many countries facing compounding climate risks, civil society has a crucial role in promoting community-based solutions, social inclusion, and resilient development strategies. Participants will share effective approaches for aligning people-first economic policies with environmental sustainability.

### Tuesday, 5 August

#### **11:30–13:00 | Plenary 2: Digital Economy, Innovation, and Sustainable Development**

Innovation and digital connectivity are essential for unlocking opportunities in LLDCs.

This session will focus on addressing the digital divide, strengthening digital infrastructure, and supporting innovation ecosystems to enhance productivity and service delivery. Participants will discuss how civil society can champion digital inclusion and contribute to achieving the Awaza Programme of Action through transformative technologies.

#### **15:00–17:30 | Plenary 3: Financial Architecture, Policies, and Partnerships for LLDCs**

Finance must serve development — not deepen vulnerability.

This session will focus on civil society's role in advocating for debt sustainability, fairer financial systems, and more accessible, predictable financing for LLDCs. It will also look back to the 2025 Financing for Development Conference (FFD4) in Sevilla, aiming to align civil society voices for impact.

## 17:30–18:00 | Closing Session

The Forum will conclude with a summary of key messages, commitments, and civil society declaration that will feed into the LLDC3 conference.

This closing moment will reinforce the value of civil society as a partner for implementation, accountability, and transformation.

(Civil Society Summary to be presented at the official closing of the LLDC3 Conference)

### Partners

- Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (BOCONGO)
- Southern Africa Development Community- Council of NGOs (SADC CNGO)
- Botswana Watch (BW)
- Rwanda Civil Society Platform
- Network of International NGOs, Rwanda
- AFRODAD – African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
- LDC Watch
- Third World Network
- Zambia Social Forum
- SEATINI Uganda – Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute
- Young Volunteers for the Environment, Rwanda
- Global Policy Forum
- Social Watch

### Outcome

The LLDC3 Civil Society Forum will produce a declaration developed by the participating civil society organizations. This declaration will be shared with the Plenary of the Conference and included in its report.

### Focal Points

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More information on LLDC3 is available at: [Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries | United Nations](#)