



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

Private Sector Forum

5-6 August 2025

Awaza, Turkmenistan

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) is to be held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, from 5 to 8 August 2025, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the theme “Driving progress through partnerships”. The Conference will forge partnerships to implement a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

The LLDC3 Private Sector Forum is a high-level opportunity for businesses to engage with global leaders to strategize on channeling the power of the private sector to shape the sustainable development agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 606 million people of the 32 LLDCs.

The two-day Forum will feature a high-level opening dialogue, four thematic sessions, side-events and networking and exhibition areas with booths. The LLDC3 Private Sector Forum is co-organised by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, and UN-OHRLLS.

Priority thematic areas

Business in the LLDC group of countries can be overlooked with focus drawn to the challenges of being landlocked, yet profound opportunities exist both within the LLDCs and in the addressing of these challenges. The Private Sector Forum will focus on the following priority thematic areas of the private sector:

- **Trade & Transit:** Getting goods to and from LLDCs entails considerable business in the areas of transport, logistics, freight forwarding and customs clearance, as well as alignment in government trade and transit procedures and processes. In 2024 alone, imports into LLDCs reached \$344 billion while exports amounted to \$281 billion.¹
- **Growth Opportunities:** LLDCs abound in untapped business opportunities—exports of travel and tourism services in LLDCs reached \$20 billion in 2023. LLDCs are rich in primary commodities (accounting for 83% of their exports), with many LLDCs having potential in the critical mineral resources needed for the adoption of green technologies, such as batteries and solar energy equipment.
- **Digital Development:** Digital transformation has opened up new possibilities for the international supply of digital services that has seen exports in digitally-deliverable services from LLDCs increase by 113% since 2019, more than triple the average growth rate for the rest of the world.²
- **Financing & Investment:** A rapid expansion in FDI is needed to seize the opportunities of the LLDCs. Just bringing the road and rail infrastructure of all the LLDCs to global benchmarks would involve an estimated \$509.3 billion in investments.³

¹ UNCTAD (2025). UNCTAD Statistics. Merchandise: Total trade and share, annual

² UNCTAD (2025). UNCTAD Statistics. International trade in digitally-deliverable services, value, shares and growth, annual

³ See https://www.un.org/ohrls/sites/www.un.org.ohrls/files/lllcs_publications/lllcs_report_18_digital_final.pdf

Outcomes

- **Private Sector Priorities for Action Document:** identifying public-private recommendations and actions to support sustainable development in LLDCs with inputs determined by each thematic session chair and with a focus on how the private sector can drive sustainable development in LLDCs and the partnerships required with governments to deliver upon the SDGs.
- **Showcased partnerships:** the presentation of pledges and commitments to advance the private sector contribution to the achievement of the priorities contained in the Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2024-2034.
- **LLDC Global Business Network:** establishment of a global platform for private sector perspectives for the sustainable development of LLDCs.

Why attend?

The LLDC Private Sector Forum provides a once-in-a-decade opportunity for businesses to build transformative partnerships and mobilize investments across the LLDCs, which have a combined population of 606 million people, set to reach 1 billion by 2060. This is an opportunity for the voice of business to be central to these discussions and for participants to:

- **Hear from and interact with world leaders** on the projects, programmes and priorities for development in LLDCs.
- **Shape the implementation of the Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2024-2034** that will guide the overall engagement of the entire UN system across the 32 landlocked developing countries.
- **Build transformative partnerships** across governments, world leaders, heads of UN agencies, chief executives and global investors.
- **Articulate the voice of business** in a Private Sector Priorities for Action Document for the LLDCs.
- **Gain a platform to launch concrete programmes, partnerships and initiatives** for the LLDCs and to identify implementation partners.
- **Engage with Youth Entrepreneurs** from across the LLDCs and hear how the challenges of being landlocked are being overcome by a new generation of innovative start-ups.
- **Attend Private Sector Forum Special Events** which are to be hosted by a range of businesses, business support organization, and partners focused on pressing development questions.
- **Participate in exhibitions** with businesses and their partners featuring work, products and initiatives in LLDCs.

By charting pathways for connecting landlocked countries to markets, the implementation of the Programme of Action will depend on the active engagement of the private sector.

Where and when?

The LLDC3 Private Sector Forum will take place on **5-6 August 2025** in Awaza, Turkmenistan, at the center of the third United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) on 5-8 August 2025.

Additional information on the Private Sector Forum is available on the dedicated Forum webpage: www.un.org/en/landlocked/private-sector-forum

Co-organizing partners



How can I attend the LLDC3 Private Sector Forum?

Interested businesses, business associations, business support organizations and other related organizations are invited to visit the participate section of the LLDC3 website for the latest information on accreditation and registration at the following link: <https://www.un.org/en/landlocked/participate>

Participants are encouraged to ensure that their organization or business is duly accredited ahead of published deadlines and that each participating individual is registered. Participants are required to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

Focal Points

Jamie MacLeod, OHRLLS – Jamie.macleod@un.org



More information on LLDC3 is available at: **Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries | United Nations**

Draft Programme

Tuesday 5 August 2025

1500-1545 High-level Opening Session

How can the Private Sector Unlock Development?

Description: High-level speakers to share their perspectives on the theme, “How can the private sector unlock development in Landlocked Developing Countries?”. The Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) represents a once-in-a-decade opportunity to develop innovative and scalable solutions and to foster partnerships for actions that can change the investment landscape and structure of the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). This session seeks to put at the highest level the role of the private sector in the heart of LLDC3 to articulate a vision for unlocking opportunities to deliver a truly transformative decade of development.

Moderator: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan and Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan

1600-1715 Thematic Session I: Trade & Transit

Is being landlocked a trade trap?

Description: Is being landlocked a “trade trap”? At the very heart of the difficulty of being landlocked are challenges with trade. For Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), imports and exports must overcome longer and more complex transport routes to and from seaports through transit countries to reach their destination. Without effective trade facilitation and efficient transit systems, this locks LLDCs out of international trade. An impactful Programme of Action for the LLDCs must address trade and transit through the private sector. Leading freight and logistics companies are already investing in innovative ways to better connect LLDCs with the support of regional intergovernmental organizations and the UN system. This session will share experiences and best practices with a view to exploring opportunities for improving trade and transit to and from LLDCs through the implementation of the new Programme of Action.

Co-organizer: International Trade Centre (ITC)

PSF Special Events (1815-1945)

Wednesday 6 August 2025

0830-0945 PSF Special Events

1000-1115 Thematic Session II: LLDC Growth Opportunities

New opportunities in LLDCs?

Description: This thematic session showcases growth opportunities and support measures to empower LLDCs to harness their great potential by strategically leveraging new growth opportunities, to overcome their unique challenges, and achieve sustainable and inclusive development in the rapidly evolving global economy. By showcasing exemplary business and

development opportunities in LLDCs and exploring strategies to address persistent growth challenges, the session aims to enhance the pivotal role of the private sector in fostering inclusive and sustainable development in LLDCs.

Co-organizer: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

1145-1300 Thematic Session III: Financing & Investment

How can financing be unlocked in LLDCs?

Description: The scale of investment in the LLDCs to realize the new Programme of Action creates considerable financing opportunities. Already the LLDCs comprise a growing market of 606 million people worth \$838 billion that is set to expand to over 1 billion people by 2060. Bringing the road and rail infrastructure of all the LLDCs to global benchmarks to serve these markets would involve an estimated \$509.3 billion in investments. How can that financing be unlocked? This session dives in to consider in further detail the financial means of implementing the new Programme of Action for LLDCs.

Co-organizer: United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)

1315-1445 PSF Special Events

1500-1615 Thematic Session IV: Digital Development

Is digitalization the solution to landlockedness?

The global economy is markedly different from that of 2014 when the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) started. Importantly, digital transformation is rapidly gaining ground and promising to accelerate social and economic development in LLDCs. It requires, however, governments and the private sector to step up strategic investments in digital infrastructure and boost innovative digital solutions across the board. By enhancing cross-border connectivity and reducing trade barriers, digital infrastructure also enables more efficient and cost-effective trade, positioning LLDCs to participate prominently in the global digital economy. What's more, investments in digital connectivity make these countries attractive destinations for foreign direct investment, especially in sectors such as e-commerce and technology. Increased investment can spur economic growth while also creating opportunities for local businesses, including small and medium enterprises. Prioritizing digital infrastructure is key for LLDCs to overcome geographical challenges, attract investments, and accelerate their path to sustainable development and inclusive digital transformation.

Co-organizers: International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

1645-1730 High-level Closing Session

Delivering development through the private sector

Description: This high-level session takes stock of the voice of the private sector, including the policy priorities articulated and the commitments delivered through the LLDC3 Private Sector Forum. It asks, "what next?" to ensure that the private sector is harnessed for delivering development through the Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries.

1815-1945 PSF Special Events

Concurrent: 5-6 August 2025

PSF Exhibition Booths

Description: Held concurrently throughout the business forum offering a platform for businesses, business support organisations, and investment promotion agencies to showcase their work and establish connections.

PSF Bilateral Meeting Spaces

Description: Opportunities to facilitate meetings for attending CEOs to engage and explore partnership opportunities with businesses, government leaders and development heads.