



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

# **Women Leader's Meeting**

**7 August 2025**

**Awaza, Turkmenistan**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

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## Background

The 32 Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in the world are facing unique challenges, which include lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness, limited access to global markets, inadequate infrastructure, and high vulnerability to external shocks. The lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other overlapping crises have aggravated their situation further.

Women often bear a disproportionate burden of these challenges due to their lack of socio-economic and political influence, low level of participation in the workforce, lack of access to education and healthcare, fewer opportunities in business and financing, and other systemic barriers and discriminatory practices in societies.

Among the 590 million people of the LLDCs, about 49% are women. Therefore, women's full, equal, and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making processes and actions is fundamental to achieve effective implementation of the new Programme of Action for LLDCs.

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development acknowledges the specific vulnerabilities that women face and recognizes the indispensable role of women in achieving progress across all its Goals and targets. It commits to closing the gender gap and strengthening support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The last decades have seen some important progress in women empowerment globally, as well as in LLDCs. Notably, in the national parliaments of LLDCs, the proportion of seats held by women increased from 7.8% in 2000 to 30.1% in 2023, exceeding the global average of 26.5%. Rwanda, which is also an LLDC, stands out globally in this regard as it ranked among the top 10 countries in 2020 to have narrowed the gender gap (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020).

Whilst some progress has been achieved towards women empowerment, it is far too slow, with women still vastly under-represented in decision-making globally, with gender parity in every sphere of socio-economic and political arena still a distant goal. The UN Secretary General's special edition SDGs report, 2023, reveals that, at the current rate, it will take an estimated 300 years to end child marriage, 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments. The report identifies, political leadership, investments, and comprehensive policy reforms as the way forward to dismantle systemic barriers to achieving SDG5.

The lack of gender-disaggregated data and evidence to monitor advances and incentivize policy actions are other major impediments. Strengthening data collection mechanisms to include gender perspectives is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of gender gaps and for driving progress towards gender parity.

## Thematic focus

The new Programme of Action for LLDCs to be adopted at the "Third UN Conference on the LLDCs (LLDC3)" recognizes that the gender gap persists across all areas, including with respect to assets, inputs and services and that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in LLDCs. The programme of actions outlines several actions and targets, under its five priority areas aimed towards women and girl's empowerment.

Promoting and supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through genuine partnerships, can harness huge untapped potentials of women in accelerating progress towards the implementation of the POA for the Decade 2024-2034 and the achievement of the SDGs. There is proven track record that women's economic participation, ownership, and enhanced access to productive assets speeds up development, helps overcome poverty and inequalities, and improves children's nutrition, health, and school attendance. In turn, women empowerment puts economy on a stronger footing, bringing about new solutions to the pre-existing socio-economic challenges, and increasing economic resilience and growth.

## Objectives

- **Mobilizing high-level political support** to ensure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in implementation of the new programme of action for the LLDCs.
- **Highlighting best practices in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment** in LLDCs with a view to creating a platform for networking and experience sharing among stakeholders.
- **Identifying recommendations and required commitments** to amplify voice and opportunities for women that will help accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2024-2034 recognizing its strong links with the 2030 Agenda.
- **Enhancing partnerships and collective actions** together with all stakeholders to provide women with increased access to and capacity support for utilization of resources, technology, and financing.

## Organizers

The meeting is organized by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), The Government of Turkmenistan and the Central Asian Women Leaders' Caucus.

**Key Partners:** Governments of Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan), UNDP, UNRCCA and UN Women regional Office.

## Outcome

The meeting will have a summary that will be shared at the closing of the Conference.

## Forum Format

The event will be a 120-minute roundtable discussion, with an opening session, a panel made up of Women Leader representatives from the LLDCs and development partners, followed by interventions from participants. This will be a multi-stakeholder event featuring women leaders from Governments, United Nations, National parliaments, Youth, Private Sector, and Civil Society Organizations.

## Focal Points

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More information on LLDC3 is available at: <https://www.un.org/landlocked>