

The Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3)

The Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) concluded in Awaza, Turkmenistan. The summit focused on addressing the unique challenges faced by the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) by strengthening partnerships and mobilizing international support.

Key outcomes and agreements

- **The Awaza Programme of Action (APoA) 2024–2034:** The conference formally endorsed this framework, which outlines a decade-long plan for accelerating sustainable development in LLDCs. The APoA focuses on key priority areas, including:
 - Structural economic transformation.
 - Trade and regional integration.
 - Transport and infrastructure development.
 - Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
 - Mobilizing financing and partnerships.
- **The Awaza Political Declaration:** Participants adopted this declaration, which reinforces the goals of the APoA and calls for increased investment from multilateral development banks, stronger South-South cooperation, and better integration of LLDC issues into global trade and climate discussions.
- **New LLDC climate negotiating bloc:** A new climate negotiating bloc was formed to advocate for the specific needs of landlocked nations at international climate talks, including the COP30 climate conference in Brazil in 2025.

Conference highlights and themes

- **"Driving Progress Through Partnerships":** This was the main theme of the four-day event, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, and the private sector.
- **Focus on connectivity:** The conference stressed the need to develop physical and digital infrastructure to overcome geographical barriers. UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted how improved infrastructure and transit freedom could significantly boost trade and economic development for LLDCs.

- **Host country initiatives:** As the host, Turkmenistan used its platform to propose several initiatives aligned with the conference goals, including:
 - A Global Atlas of Sustainable Transport Connectivity.
 - A Global Hydrogen Energy Transition Programme.
 - A Global Circular Economy Transition Framework.
- **Addressing unique LLDC challenges:** The event highlighted the disproportionate barriers faced by LLDCs, such as higher trade costs, inadequate infrastructure, and climate vulnerabilities. The UN Under-Secretary-General Rabab Fatima urged a shift in the narrative, stating that geographical barriers are only "part of the story" and that determination is key.

Significance

- The conference provided a crucial opportunity to reaffirm and advance the sustainable development agenda for landlocked developing countries.
- The new Programme of Action represents a "bold path forward" for these nations, aiming to turn geographic constraints into opportunities through regional cooperation and international solidarity.
- The event emphasized the need for a more equitable global economic and financial system that better serves the needs of landlocked developing countries.

Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Terms

01

United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

The UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in 2025 focused on addressing development gaps through partnerships, with the adopted Awaza Programme of Action (APoA) 2024–2034 as its main outcome.

Key points

- **Participants:** The conference gathered global leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss solutions for the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), which are home to over 600 million people.
- **Core Theme:** "Driving Progress Through Partnerships" was the central theme, emphasizing the need for global cooperation to bridge development gaps.

- **Major Outcome:** The Awaza Programme of Action (APoA) 2024–2034 was adopted, providing a blueprint to accelerate sustainable development and resilience for LLDCs.

Unique challenges of LLDCs

- **Geographic isolation:** Lack of direct territorial access to the sea places LLDCs at a significant disadvantage.
- **High costs:** This isolation leads to higher transport and transit costs, which can be more than double those of coastal countries.
- **Economic vulnerability:** LLDCs face economic fragility with limited diversification and reduced access to global markets. Their reliance on neighbors for transit creates economic and geopolitical risks.
- **Climate vulnerability:** Despite contributing minimally to global emissions, LLDCs are disproportionately impacted by climate-related disasters.

India's relevance

- India, a coastal country, shares borders with several LLDCs (e.g., Nepal and Bhutan).
- It has historically provided aid and cooperation to these nations.
- India's expertise in infrastructure, trade facilitation, and regional trade initiatives like SAARC and BIMSTEC is relevant.

History of LLDC conferences

The UN has held three major conferences to address the needs of LLDCs, each producing a decade-long programme of action.

1. First UN Conference: Almaty, Kazakhstan (2003)

- **Result:** The Almaty Programme of Action (APoA).
- **Focus:** A "New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation," emphasizing joint efforts between LLDCs and transit countries.
- **Key actions:** Included efforts to harmonize customs procedures, improve infrastructure like railways and dry ports, and boost technical and financial assistance.

2. Second UN Conference: Vienna, Austria (2014)

- **Result:** The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for 2014–2024.
- **Focus:** A comprehensive review of the APoA and reaffirmed global commitment to LLDCs.
- **Key priorities:**
 - Fundamental transit policy issues
 - Infrastructure development and maintenance
 - Trade and trade facilitation
 - Regional integration and cooperation
 - Structural economic transformation
 - Means of implementation.

3. Third UN Conference: Awaza, Turkmenistan (2025)

- **Result:** The Awaza Programme of Action (APoA) for 2024–2034.
- **Theme:** "Driving Progress through Partnerships".
- **Objective:** To mobilize partnerships and investment to address structural challenges and accelerate sustainable development.



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Practice Questions:

1. Consider the following statements regarding the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3):

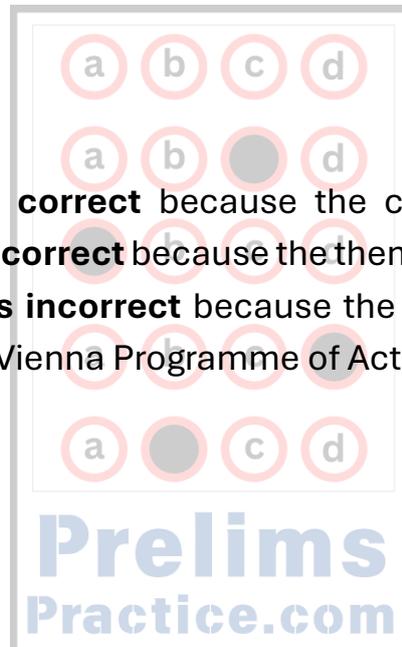
- I. The conference was held in August 2025 in Awaza, Turkmenistan
- II. The theme of the conference was "Driving Progress through Partnerships"
- III. The conference adopted the Vienna Programme of Action for the period 2024-2034

Which of the above statements are correct?

- a) I Only
- b) I and II
- c) II and III
- d) I, II and III

Answer: b

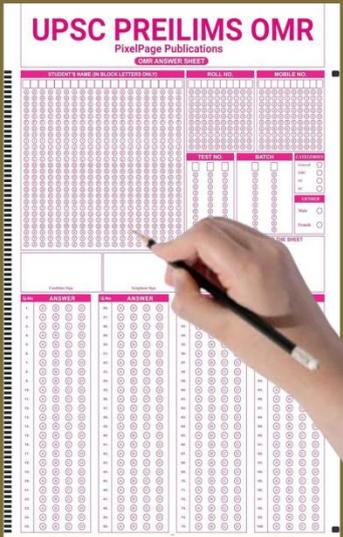
Explanation: **Statement I is correct** because the conference was held in Awaza, Turkmenistan. **Statement II is correct** because the theme was "Driving Progress through Partnerships". **Statement III is incorrect** because the conference adopted the Awaza Programme of Action, not the Vienna Programme of Action.





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