



**United
Nations**



Government of Malawi

AFRICA REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

*IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIFTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC5)*

22-26 February 2021

HOSTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI, CHAIR OF THE LDC GROUP
IN COLLABORATION WITH UNOHRLLS AND UNECA



CONCEPT NOTE



Photo: World Bank

BACKGROUND

The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the decade 2011-2020 (IPoA) is coming to an end. The General Assembly decided to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), at Heads of State and Government level, in Doha, Qatar, from 23 to 27 January 2022. See GA resolution [74/232B](#)*.

At the LDC5 Conference, the international community is expected to:

- Undertake a comprehensive appraisal of IPoA implementation.
- Identify effective international and domestic policies, new emerging challenges and opportunities, best practices, and means to address them.
- Reaffirm global commitment to address LDCs' special needs.
- Mobilize additional international support measures and action.
- Formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between LDCs and their development partners.

The Conference will be preceded by broad-based and inclusive substantive preparations at national, regional and global level engaging all LDCs and their partners, parliamentarians as well as civil society and private sector representatives. For more information on LDC5 preparations, visit: www.un.org/ldc5.

Two regional preparatory meetings are being planned in early 2021 in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The General Assembly designated the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) to lead the preparations for LDC5.

In line with the mandate above, the Africa Regional Review meeting in preparation for LDC5, also including Haiti, is being organized by UN-OHRLLS and ECA, jointly with the Government of the Republic of Malawi and the support of the UN RC Office and Country Team in Malawi, from 22-26 February 2021.

The Africa Regional Review meeting provides a unique opportunity to review the implementation of the IPoA in the region, as 33 out of 46 LDCs are located in Africa.

* See also previous GA resolutions 73/242 and 74/232, and ECOSOC resolutions 2019/3 and 2020/L.21.



Photo: World Bank

They face multiple challenges in achieving the goals and targets of the IPoA, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as Agenda 2063. Their structural constraints are compounded by new and emerging challenges, including those posed by ongoing conflict, climate change and their devastating impacts. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities of African LDCs and Haiti and has already reversed some of their hard-won development gains.

THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE OF PROGRESS AGAINST THE GOALS OF THE ISTANBUL PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Before COVID-19, African LDCs and Haiti had been making progress in implementing the IPoA priority areas, albeit from very low baselines and with large variations across the 34 countries. Both man-made and natural crises remain prevalent among African LDCs and Haiti and risk derailing progress. High and recently increasing poverty rates, inequality, civil strife and political instability are widespread. A high rate of urbanization among African LDCs makes cities and urban centres increasingly vulnerable to the impact of disasters. Without strong and purposeful governance that aspires towards sustainable development, economic and social outcomes in these LDCs will remain weak.

COVID-19 has also significantly affected productive capacity and trade, through collapsing commodity prices, disruption of value chains for manufacturing and a virtual standstill of international tourism, leading to a sharp reduction in GDP growth. Together with the widening fiscal deficit and the drop in FDI and remittances as well as high illicit financial flows and unsustainable debt levels it is expected that the effects of COVID-19 will jeopardize LDCs' progress towards sustainable development for years to come.

Until 2020, six countries have graduated from the LDC group, of which three are from the African continent namely: Botswana, Cabo Verde and Equatorial Guinea. Going forward, it is expected that more countries from all regions should graduate from the LDCs group.

Thus, efforts to embark on building back better and increase resilience towards future shocks, including through sustainable and inclusive economic growth, supported by the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, building human assets, diversifying their economies and ensuring social protection, must continue in all African LDCs to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as the Agenda 2063.



OBJECTIVE OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

The main objective of the meeting is to assess the structural challenges, vulnerabilities and emerging issues faced by African LDCs and Haiti in pursuing sustainable development as per the IPoA targets and goals. The meeting will provide a platform for peer exchange and learning, and for all stakeholders to gain insight and agree on concrete, targeted and effective cooperative actions and recommendations that will assist these countries to overcome structural challenges and accelerate sustainable development progress over the next decade. The meeting will also provide space for discussion on how to strengthen support provided to the LDCs by the international community and to build linkages to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as the Agenda 2063.

The outcome of the Africa Regional Review meeting will be a ministerial declaration negotiated by the African LDCs and Haiti. The outcome is expected to outline the expected components of a renewed partnership for sustainable development between the LDCs and their development partners. The Africa Regional Review Outcome Document will be endorsed at the 53rd ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which is scheduled for 17-23 March 2021 and will also serve as an important background -

document for the Preparatory Committee Meetings for the LDC5 Conference to be held in New York on 24-28 May 2021 and 26-30 July 2021.

FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION

Given the continued restrictions and uncertainties due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the African Regional Review meeting will be held in a virtual format from 22 to 26 February 2021. Participants will include Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as well as from other relevant Ministries from African LDCs and Haiti, IPOA National Focal Points, representatives from partner countries, as well as development practitioners from international and regional organisations, the private sector, academia and civil society.

A virtual high-level opening on day 1 will be followed by 4 half days of virtual thematic sessions on topics of special relevance to African LDCs and Haiti. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Portuguese.

Details about the virtual platform and registration procedures will be shared soon.

Further information about LDC5 and the Africa Regional Review meeting, including the annotated programme, will be made available at: www.un.org/ldc5/