



UN-OHRLLS

Least Developed Countries
Landlocked Developing Countries
Small Island Developing States

United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed
Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing
States (UN-OHRLLS)**

**Report of the Twenty-first Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting of the United Nations
system and international organisations on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme
of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020**

Virtual meeting
17 November 2020, 09:00-12:30

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Acronyms

AAAA	Addis-Ababa Action Agenda
CDP	Committee for Development Policy
CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
IACG	Inter-agency Consultative Group
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IATF	Inter-agency Task Force on Least Developed Country Graduation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPoA	Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDC5	Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Aim of the meeting

The Twenty-first meeting of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group of the United Nations system and international organisations on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (IACG) was held virtually on 17 November 2020, organized by UN-OHRLLS. The IACG meeting provided a platform for the participating agencies, funds and programmes and other international organizations to share an update on the status of preparations for LDC5, including updates by UN-OHRLLS on the process and progress made by UN organizations. The meeting also provided the opportunity to adopt the terms of reference (TORs) for the IACG on LDCs, which were prepared in response to an evaluation undertaken by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services, which recommended that UN-OHRLLS strengthen the IACG as a mechanism of coordination around implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA).

Opening remarks

The moderator, **Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS**, welcomed all participants, stressed the importance of supporting LDCs in these challenging times, and expressed her appreciation for the high level of participation at the meeting, both in terms of numbers and seniority. She invited Ms. 'Utoikamanu to deliver her opening remarks.

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, warmly welcomed all participants to the Twenty-first meeting of the IACG, and emphasized the general context in which the meeting was taking place, namely amid a rising second wave of the COVID pandemic, which threatened to be more severe than the first in many parts of the world with continuing non-negligible negative impacts on the global economy and in particular on the LDCs. Given these challenging times, it was very encouraging to see such strong participation by the UN organizations at the meeting.

She particularly thanked Ms. Cristina Duarte, Under-Secretary-General & UN Special Advisor on Africa, and Mr. Mourad Wahba, Associate Administrator of UNDP for joining the meeting, and expressed her gratitude to see so many other senior officials around the virtual table. She welcomed a new arrival to the group, Ms. Vivian Okeke, Representative of the IAEA Director General to the United Nations, Director of the IAEA Liaison Office, New York.

Since the previous meeting in June, a paramount concern of UN-OHRLLS had been to provide all possible assistance to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, to weather the onslaught of the pandemic, address its devastating economic fallout, and to seek ways of mobilizing resources for relief, recovery and to build back better. The campaign #MostVulnerable91 had been launched to

this end. The campaign noted that funding spent to date by international partners to help tackle COVID-19 and its impacts in LDCs was considerable, but minute compared to the global response for COVID-19. Hence more support from the international community would be needed. She welcomed the good news from the G20 of a common approach for restructuring government debt, which was expected to be adopted over the upcoming weekend at the G20 Virtual Summit.

The High Representative recalled that during their virtual meeting at the start of the General Assembly, the LDC Foreign Ministers had reiterated their call for a global stimulus package in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, expressing their deepening concerns at slow, or reversing, progress towards the IPoA and SDGs. She emphasized the strong show of support, at that meeting, from the development partners, including Ministers from traditional donors, partner countries from the South, development finance institutions, as well as from the newly elected President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, who noted the imperative that the international community extend its full support to LDCs to tackle this pandemic. In this regard, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir had decided to give highest priority to supporting the LDCs during his mandate, notably by establishing a Board of Advisors to enhance support for the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. The Board of Advisors would meet periodically to seek to address the “bottlenecks, challenges, and vulnerabilities” of these 91 countries, and to support specific UNGA mandates for the 75th session related to vulnerable countries. The first meeting of the Board of Advisors was scheduled for the 24th November 2020. Additionally, the PGA would convene, jointly with the President of ECOSOC, a dedicated thematic event in preparation for the upcoming LDC5.

With LDC5 rescheduled for January 2022, the High Representative highlighted the need to restart preparations in earnest, picking up from where they had been left off and taking into account the impact of the pandemic. For this reason, the main substantive item on the agenda would focus on LDC5 preparations. She noted that joint efforts over the next fourteen months would be critical to resetting the LDCs back on track towards sustainable development.

Available projections of foreign direct investment and remittances, both critical sources of external finance for the LDCs, indicated sharp declines. A recent update from the WTO provided further evidence of the sizeable contraction in the LDCs' export volumes and export values.

The challenges faced by the LDCs had been greatly amplified by the pandemic – as well as the task of supporting these countries. Therefore, the IACG mechanism also needed to live up to growing expectations, which justified the need for a fast and effective collaboration. It was in this context that UN-OHRLLS, as the convener of the IACG, had developed the Terms of Reference for the group, as had been done for the IACG on LLDCs and also SIDS. The effort

was in part guided by the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), which had conducted an evaluation of OHRLLS last year. The aim of the TORs were to ensure that the IACG was a more effective mechanism of coordination for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs.

The High Representative thanked participants for providing valuable feedback on the draft Term of Reference, the revised version of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. She supported the adoption of the revised version at this meeting, so as to lead to formalization of the work and to promote the strengthening of the IACG and the work that it aimed at fulfilling.

Update on the status of preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs (LDC5)

Introduction

Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS, moderator of the session, introduced the first agenda item on an update on the preparations for LDC5. She recalled that the LDC5 Conference would be held from 23 to 27 January 2022 in Doha, Qatar, and that it would be preceded by an inclusive preparatory process based on national, regional and global reviews of the Istanbul Programme of Action. She added that the outcomes of these broad-based reviews would feed into the work of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), which would meet twice, in New York, from 24 to 28 May 2021 and from 26 to 30 July 2021. The PrepCom will start discussions on the new Programme of Action for the LDCs that would be adopted at the LDC5 Conference. The Director further recalled that an organizational session of the PrepCom would be held on 8 February 2021 to elect its two co-chairs (one from an LDC and one from a development partner). She noted that an “Academic Conference for achieving sustainable development in LDCs” had been rescheduled for 30 August – 1 September 2021. She noted further that the new dates of the Africa-Haiti Regional Review Meeting and the Asia-Pacific Regional Review Meeting were still being finalized, and were expected to take place in the period February - April 2021, and could be in either virtual or hybrid forms.

Progress was also being made with regard to the host Government, Qatar, with a series of virtual meetings on the full range of organizational and planning issues to be convened during the following week. The Director noted that a dedicated website on LDC5 had recently been launched, which could be found at <https://www.un.org/ldc5/>, and encouraged participants to visit the website as all updates and documents would be posted there, including on the academic, civil society, private sector, parliamentarians and youth tracks.

Due to time constraints, she invited participants to convey only key messages in their interventions, in particular concerning the ways in which each organization intended to contribute, and how the pandemic might have affected the organization's work programme of related events. She encouraged participants to send full statements or additional inputs to UN-OHRLS for inclusion in the final report of the meeting.

Presentations by participating organizations

Mr. Mourad Wahba, Associate Administrator, UNDP, noted that in the current context, Governments had stepped up to the challenge, repurposing significant fiscal resources to fight the pandemic and its consequences. LDCs had mobilized on average 2% of their GDP to respond to the crisis. However, fiscal space was shrinking, and the economic outlook remained uncertain, compounding pre-existing vulnerabilities such as debt sustainability and dependency on volatile commodity prices in LDCs. It was likely that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic would still be felt at the time of the LDC5 Conference in January 2022, and as the group was working towards the preparation of the Conference, it should aim at identifying support measures for LDCs to chart inclusive, sustainable, resilient and green recovery pathways while accelerating the realization of the global Goals. UNDP, working closely with the UN system, had contributed to the formulation of 128 socio-economic impact assessments of COVID19, including in many LDCs.

Three themes were found to be recurring: the need to strengthen social protection, support jobs and livelihoods, and expand fiscal space, all of which were of extreme relevance to LDCs. To protect the most vulnerable in the face of the crisis, underlying conditions of vulnerability including gender inequalities, and leveraging digitalization and innovation to accelerate progress needed to be addressed.

In this context, UNDP was working with UN partners and beyond to strengthen social protection in over 30 LDCs, such as in Afghanistan where UNDP had expanded social protection for poor and vulnerable populations through pensions for the elderly and public works, and in Burundi and Madagascar where the focus was on protecting jobs and informal workers. UNDP was similarly advocating for a temporary basic income (TBI) which would allow to support the livelihoods of 2.7 billion people living below or just above the poverty line. UNDP's analysis indicated that such measures were financially viable and represented the kind of solution at scale needed in the current circumstances.

UNDP was supporting LDCs to understand the implications of the pandemic on LDC graduation, for example, in Angola and Sao Tome and Principe, which were scheduled for graduation in 2021 and 2024 respectively. Both countries' GDP has contracted significantly (-4.0% and -6.5% respectively) compounding additional vulnerabilities related to debt distress. Angola's case further placed the spotlight on the income criteria for graduation based on which the country was set to leave the LDC category, because it did not take into account structural economic, social and environmental factors affecting development.

Even before COVID19, UNDP had steadily supported policy analysis and mainstreaming of LDC graduation at country level. In Asia, for instance, the National Human Development Report of

Nepal focused on identifying measures for sustaining progress on human development and graduation. In Africa, UNDP was ramping up its efforts to support structural impediments of African LDCs through its renewed strategic offer spanning several impact areas: a) natural resource governance; b) structural economic transformation; c) sustainable energy; d) climate change and e) peace and security. Investments in these areas were meant to tackle structural challenges while raising productive capacities.

UNDP was committed to innovation for development in the LDCs. UNDP was expanding the network of Accelerator Labs to cover 70% of LDCs and low-income countries in 2021. This network aimed at tapping into wider and more diverse sources of innovation helping to build ecosystems of innovation for development. On the basis of the results achieved so far, these Labs would play a critical role in experimenting, identifying and scaling up creative solutions to new development challenges in LDCs, working in partnership with government and non-governmental actors.

Several examples of specific contributions to the preparatory process to the LDC5 Conference were identified. Support was provided for the formulation of national reviews on the implementation of the IPoA – for example, in Lao PDR and Myanmar, and the publication of an issue brief on poverty and inequality in LDCs. In partnership with the World Inequality Lab, UNDP was working on a policy paper discussing how LDCs were responding to the COVID-19 economic crisis, and how differences in response packages were likely to affect inequalities between countries and within countries in the years to come. There were also several publications that would be ready before the end of 2020, which aimed to contribute to the broader discussion on LDC graduation and reflect on the next Programme of Action from the perspective of African LDCs. These included: a) Graduation of African LDCs: Emerging Issues in a New Development Landscape; b) Covid-19 and External Debt in Africa; and c) An analysis of the immediate and long-term effects of the global pandemic on development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr. Satya Tripathi, Assistant Secretary-General, UNEP, echoed the previously mentioned challenges that LDCs and SIDS face especially in the context of graduation. These countries were on the path to graduating to a promising future only to be struck by COVID, debt distress and other challenges. He noted the negative impacts of climate change would only worsen. He drew a parallel with the impacts that landlocked countries, already water-stressed, and SIDS, already subject to rising sea level, were already suffering from, and would increasingly suffer from.

Focusing on climate change, SDGs and Agenda 2030, he noted it was critical to identify what the important community of stakeholders could do in support of these countries to alleviate severe stress, as part of the LDC5 preparations. All the challenges faced by LDCs, and the world in general, converged. COVID-19 was not the last pandemic, there would be more diseases. In this regard, UNEP published a scientific study in July 2020 *“Preventing the next pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how breaking the chain of transmission”*, which demonstrated that in the last 3 decades 75% of new diseases were zoonotic diseases, transmitted from animals to humans. This highlighted once more the necessity of having these environmental considerations on the table for the next ten years.

In terms of contributions, as UNEP was supporting LDCs through different programmes of work, the Organization strongly welcomes the adoption of the TORs of IACG on LDCs and the strengthening of the IACG as a mechanism of coordination and implementation of the Programme of Action on LDCs. He concluded by expressing UNEP's commitments to bring its expertise both at the highest level of the organization and at the grassroots levels, to fight what is considered as an existential threat to countries that need the support of the UN system in the most comprehensive manner.

Amb. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director, CFC, recalled that most of the LDCs were commodity dependent, being unable to convert their natural endowment into sustained economic development, and this condition resulted in great vulnerabilities, generating macroeconomic instabilities and income inequality, hindering economic development. Giving an example of how COVID-19 is impacting the continent of Africa, he recalled the fact that the best news that came from the continent, was the launching two years ago of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which was scheduled to be implemented from 1 July 2020 but that had been pushed back until 2021 because of the impact of Covid-19, which he assessed was a set-back for the continent.

Many LDCs were full of overcrowded slums where social distance and isolation are hard, if not impossible, to practice. 71% of Africa's workforce was informally employed and could not work from home, while 40% of children on the continent were undernourished. Furthermore, most LDCs were highly dependent on imports for its medicinal and pharmaceutical products and on commodity exports. Many of those exports almost came to a halt. Moreover, a good number of LDCs were submerged in high public debt due to higher interest rate payments than OECD countries, a weak fiscal tax base, and negative impacts on their currencies due to huge stimulus measures taken by OECD countries. The IPoA rightly highlighted the need for reducing many of these vulnerabilities such as the food, fuel and financial crises, which affected all countries in late 2000, as well as climate change-related risks. The overarching goal of the IPoA was to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs, to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals, and enable half of the then 48 least developed countries to graduate out of this category by 2020.

The CFC believed that addressing these vulnerabilities was at the root of structural transformation required for graduation from the LDC status. The commodity dependent countries needed to diversify their economy and invest in projects that added more value to their products, enhancing their participation in upper parts of the value chains. Recognizing their vulnerability, LDCs had been considered as a priority group in the operations of the CFC starting with the first Five Year Action Plan adopted in 1998. In this regard, the CFC had a robust portfolio of projects operating in the LDCs, aiming to support enterprises engaged in commodity value chains in these countries. In the course of 2020, the CFC had 10 active projects operating in LDCs, with a total value of USD 29.6 million, of which about USD 11.2 million were contributed by CFC. All these projects were eligible to receive support through CFC's Emergency Liquidity Facility and also, if appropriate, to have their repayment terms adjusted to help them to navigate this turbulent moment. The CFC maintained its focus to

accelerate the delivery of SDG impact projects by supporting SMEs working on the commodity sector.

In this moment of crisis, the CFC recognized the obligation that followed from the accumulated experience of its decade-long support for smallholder livelihoods and was increasing its efforts to provide the much-needed finance for the continued operation of agricultural value chains. Therefore, CFC was presently working towards forming an Impact Investment Fund where such vulnerabilities would be looked into with tailor-made programs for some of those LDCs.

Regarding the preparations for LDC5, the expansionary pressure and the fiscal distortion in the developed world left many LDC in the lurch. Even in the best of times, many of the LDCs had precarious access to finance, and resort to the printing press led to a run on the currency and an inflationary spike. Most LDCs relied on foreign income on a combination of commodity exports, tourism, and remittances: all were expected to collapse, leaving economies short of money and governments short of tax revenues. At the same time, access to international financial markets had been cut off as investors rushed to the safety of the US and other rich-country government-issued assets. In other words, just when developing countries needed to manage the pandemic, most had seen their fiscal space evaporate and faced large funding gaps.

In regards of the previous points mentioned, COVID-19 could be seen as a humble reminder of the insufficiency of the 0.7 per cent of ODA target, which should be taken to 1.0 per cent at the minimum. The impact community was working to create an ecosystem where the painful lessons learnt from COVID could be useful. In CFC's view, COVID 19 could provide an opportunity for LDCs to address their vulnerabilities, for example, through accelerating intra-regional trade by focusing on the products of greatest need during the health crisis. Countries could also start building regional value chains to advance industrialization, improve infrastructure and strengthen good governance and ethical leadership. These were all vital to guiding LDCs on the path to graduation and a vital take away for the post IPoA.

Mr. Paul Akiwumi, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UNCTAD, noted that his organization continued to participate actively in the preparation of LDC5 through different outputs and activities, and he outlined the most salient ones.

UNCTAD had prepared several publications which sought to deepen the understanding of the development challenges of the LDCs and serve as the basis for well-informed policy analysis and options for the benefit of policymakers of both LDCs and their development partners. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2020: Productive Capacities for the New Decade*, which would be launched on 3 December, reaffirmed the centrality of productive capacities and of structural transformation not just in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, but also to address the medium-to-long-term challenges of the LDCs, hoping that productive capacities would be used as the organizing framework for the formulation of the next plan of action for the LDCs for the next decade. The LDC Report 2020 was also the first publication to make wide use of a new tool developed by UNCTAD, namely the Productive Capacities Index (PCI), which

allowed assessment of the level of productive capacities reached by a country over time, but also as compared with other countries (eg. in the same country group). The PCI also allows a fine diagnosis of which components of productive capacities were pushing countries forwards or holding them back.

The report *Building and Utilizing Productive Capacities in Africa and the Least Developed Countries: A Holistic and Practical Guide* was published in June 2020. It deepened the concept of productive capacities at its different levels, and consisted mainly of a manual produced for policymakers, providing a detailed analysis of the role of industrial policies, policy instruments and policy processes. In March 2020 UNCTAD published the *Report on the implementation of the Investment Policy Review of Nepal*, which gauged the extent to which the country adopted policies to foster the contribution of FDI to the development of its productive capacities and presents suggestions for the way forward. UNCTAD's *World Investment Report 2020: International Production beyond the Pandemic* contained forecasts for FDI in LDCs in 2020 and 2021 and built scenarios for possible trajectories for international production. These scenarios should be taken into account by policymakers of LDCs and of their development partners when devising the new plan of action for the LDCs, since the form and position of insertion of LDCs into global value chains would be a crucial determinant of their achieving their development goals. In the context of its ETrade for All programme, UNCTAD in 2020 had published the *eTrade Rapid Readiness Assessments* of Benin, Malawi, Mali, Niger, United Republic of Tanzania and Western Africa Monetary Union countries. These assessments were important elements of the analysis on the impact of digital technologies in the productive capacities of LDCs, and their potential to contribute to their structural transformation.

Besides publications, UNCTAD was planning to participate actively in different events during the preparatory process of LDC5 and at the Conference itself. UNCTAD XV, which was scheduled to be held in April 2021 (and has since been rescheduled for October 2021), would be one of the steps of the preparatory process of LDC5. There were two events of note scheduled to take place during UNCTAD XV. First, the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of the LDCs would provide a unique opportunity to discuss ongoing multilateral processes relevant to the LDCs, addressing recommendations both to UNCTAD15 itself and to LDC5. Second, a side event on "Productive capacities to counter persistent and new vulnerabilities in LDCs and other weak economies" would present different points of view on the development of productive capacities and review the experience on selected successful countries. The conclusions would be forwarded as an input to the preparatory process of the new plan of action for LDCs.

UNCTAD intended to participate in the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Conference, including the regional reviews and the academic conference, and to accompany LDCs in their preparation of the sessions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee. At LDC5 itself, UNCTAD intended to propose the holding of a parallel event comprising a high-level dialogue facilitating peer-to-peer learning on a new generation of industrial policies aimed at structural transformation of LDC economies in the new decade.

Regarding technical assistance, three points were made. With regard to vulnerability profiles and the smooth transition strategy, based on its in-depth knowledge amassed during the preparation of Vulnerability Profiles of LDCs that qualified for graduation of the first time,

UNCTAD was interacting with the identified countries both in terms of lingering vulnerabilities and the challenges when preparing and implementing their smooth transition strategy. On debt management, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the foreign debt situation of many LDCs, 18 of which were either in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress. This issue would need to be taken into account during LDC5. UNCTAD was assisting half of all LDCs to improve their capacity to handle the management of public liabilities and produce reliable debt data for policymaking purposes, through its programme of Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS). With regard to *customs automation*, in the context of plummeting international trade due to the COVID-19 economic crisis, the proper management of foreign trade had become even more important. In the expected recovery, trade would play a crucial role as a means of implementation of the new programme of action for LDCs. Through its Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), UNCTAD assists LDCs to modernize customs operations and helps them improve revenue collection, facilitates trade efficiency and competitiveness by substantially reducing transaction time and costs. 83% of LDCs benefit from this system.

With regard to the revised ToRs of the IACG on LDCs, two observations were made, namely that the IACG should look at facilitating and not undertaking, and that these activities should not require additional resources for coordination, given limited budgets. UNCTAD was very keen to support joint work and looked forward to supporting preparations, including coordination on UNCTAD XV.

Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division, WTO, provided an update on trade including sobering trade figures showing the severe impacts of COVID-19 on LDCs. On 11 November, the Sub-Committee on LDCs had had a discussion on the 2020 LDC market access report, which included a special chapter on LDCs' trade developments in the first half of 2020. Exports of LDCs had been hit hard. The value of merchandise exports of LDCs declined by around 16% in the first six months of 2020, a steeper decline than for global exports (13%). In terms of products, LDCs' exports dropped significantly for fuels and mining products (-26%) as well as clothing (-18%), while exports of agricultural products were less affected (-1%). There had been a slump in services exports too, with travel services dropping close to 60% in the first half of 2020. The WTO noted that these numbers were broad averages, and that when looking at some specific countries and specific sectors the situation was even more critical, as some had experienced dramatic declines in exports. Since the exports of LDCs tended to be highly concentrated, such drops in exports of key products and key sectors could result in a significant decline in national income, which did not bode well for economic recovery. Therefore, these trends needed to be kept in mind when preparing the next Programme of Action. In particular, it would be important to further increase the focus on support that could be provided to LDCs as compared to LDCs' own obligations.

Concerning WTO support for LDC-5, WTO would participate in both Regional Review Meetings for Africa and Asia-Pacific, in whichever format it would be permissible to have these meetings. Furthermore, WTO would prepare a dedicated report for LDC-5 on LDC issues in the multilateral trading system. This report would cover three broad themes: trends in LDC trade and market access since 2011, including the impact of COVID-19; progress in the implementation of WTO Ministerial Decisions taken in favor of LDCs; and LDC graduation.

At LDC-5, WTO planned on organizing a side-event on LDC graduation, in close coordination with OHRLLS and other organizations. Regarding WTO's analytical work undertaken in the context of the EIF-WTO project on LDC graduation, two studies had already been released on the trade impacts of LDC graduation ("*Trade impacts of LDC graduation*"; "*Trade impacts of LDC graduation: Insights from country-specific market access analyses*"). Moreover, WTO was currently undertaking an assessment of the trade-related impacts of COVID-19 on graduating LDCs. WTO was also collaborating with UN DESA and other organizations to help graduating LDCs understand the impact and address the challenges that may have arisen due to the pandemic.

In regard to MC12 and the Sub-Committee on LDCs, members were still to decide on the date for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12). Kazakhstan remained an option as the Government had indicated its readiness to host the Conference. MC12 would be an important steppingstone for LDC-5, providing guidance on trade issues, including on the trade priorities of LDCs, for the next Programme of Action.

WTO expressed interest in the participation of OHRLLS in the first meeting of the Sub-Committee on LDCs in Spring 2021 (most likely second half of March/early April), as this could be a good opportunity to brief WTO Members on the preparations for LDC-5. The date of the next Sub-Committee would be communicated once it is set.

Mr. Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director, EIF, noted that despite the pandemic EIF project delivery had continued with 23 projects worth USD 18.8 million on building trade, institutional and productive capacity in the LDCs as well as analytical studies in 2020. In view of the pandemic, all projects for approval were guided to adapt to the COVID-19 context, including outlining specific risk factors and mitigation strategies.

He highlighted further the need for mobilizing much-needed financing. Two forms of resource mobilization were critical for LDCs at this stage, FDI and blended finance. He indicated three possible avenues for the LDCs to mobilize additional FDI. First, LDC could enhancing their participation in global value chains (GVCs) as foreign investors were looking for opportunities to diversify the sources of raw materials, parts and components. All LDCs may not be able to participate in the GVCs, but those with Special Economic Zones and/or industrial parks, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda and Senegal, should explore this possibility. Second, there were at least 60 fast-growing market opportunities, which were all linked to the achievement of the SDGs. These opportunities were valued at more than USD 12 trillion annually by 2030. Third, many LDCs were now defying the traditional model of structural transformation. Some LDCs were taking advantage of new sources of growth in ICT services and e-commerce. Some LDCs (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Nepal and Senegal) had been exporting ICT services in the recent past, which, as a percentage of total services exports, was higher than the global average of 10.5%. In line with the global trend, the uptake of e-commerce had increased in the LDCs during the pandemic, with LDCs such as Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Rwanda and Senegal blazing the trail.

Concerning blended finance, he referred to an OECD/UNCDF 2019 report which suggested that only 6% of private finance mobilized by official development finance benefitted the LDCs. New blended finance initiatives like the SDG500, which was a global public-private partnership to accelerate the funding of the SDGs, were making important strides in testing blended finance approaches. However, EIF saw three major challenges in the LDCs, namely: enhancing knowledge of the LDCs on the potential of blended finance; helping to find where such opportunities exist; and connecting the LDCs to such opportunities and helping them create a conducive domestic environment. To help the LDCs overcome these challenges, international support was critical. In line with SDG 17.5, he proposed, potentially as a deliverable at LDC5, that the international community create a well-endowed FDI facility (possibly aid for investment or by expanding the Aid for Trade agenda) to support the LDCs to build and/or strengthen their capacity to attract FDI and blended finance.

Finally, he highlighted the responsibility of academic institutions in the process, notably in the following areas : first, conducting independent dispassionate policy-relevant research, which would guide policymakers both in the LDCs and their partner countries, as well as in partner institutions, to understand the implications of timely decisions, which could trigger action (for example the need to provide debt relief to the LDCs to allow them some fiscal space and to prevent more people from falling into the poverty trap). Second, conducting ex-post research based on country-level data to validate and triangulate the findings of the ex-ante predictions based on global data, which may or may not represent the ground realities in specific country contexts. This was important, in particular, when the assumptions based on which predictions are made do not hold. For example, dire predictions in April 2020 were that remittances to South Asian LDCs – Bangladesh and Nepal – would decline by 22% and 14%, respectively, in 2020 due to COVID-19. However, according to latest reports from country sources, remittance receipts have increased in Bangladesh and only reduced marginally in Nepal.

Mr. Joshua Setipa, Managing Director, UN Technology Bank for LDCs, informed the meeting that, following the launch of the Tech Access Partnership (TAP) to respond to COVID19 in May, the Technology Bank together with its core partners UNDP, UNCTAD, WHO and the Commonwealth Secretariat, supported developing countries and LDCs in accessing affordable and sustainable health technologies. The focus of TAP was on localized manufacturing to promote economic self-resilience, sustainable access to lifesaving technologies, enhancing local skills and strengthening healthcare infrastructure, support sustainable value chain, and support countries on their post-COVID recoveries. Through technology transfer and capacity building support, the TAP was supporting manufacturers in several developing and LDCs. He mentioned that TAP was also an implementing partner of the Covid-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP), an initiative led by WHO, in partnership with Costa Rica's government, aiming at making vaccines, tests, treatments and health technologies to fight Covid-19 accessible to all.

In other areas of work, the Technology Bank had partnered with the FAO to deliver dedicated training to LDCs' researchers on the latest research tools and methodologies through a newly developed massive open online course. Through the course, in 2020 the Technology Bank was able to reach 3490 participants in more than 71 countries, 39 of which were LDCs. He highlighted a current partnership with UNITAR, on conducting training on disaster

management and risk mitigation, as well as a newly signed partnership with UNOOSA. Furthermore, the Technology Bank as part of the Inter Agency Task Team (IATT), Workstream (WS) under the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) was contributing to three online capacity development webinars conducted under the IATT as part of adapting to the COVID19 restrictions. The first one was scheduled to be launched on 19 November 2020.

In the coming year, the Technology Bank would be undertaking Technology Needs Assessments in the following 15 countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Djibouti, Haiti, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Sao Tome Principe, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zambia. In addition, the Technology Bank had also partnered with the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology to introduce a new programme offering fellowships to young researchers from LDCs for periods of up to 6 months.

In preparation for LDC5, the Technology Bank would commission an in-depth study on the state of STI in the LDCs and the report would be launched at the LDC5. This would be a flagship report of the Technology Bank. The Technology Bank would also engage in the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee meetings throughout 2021.

Reflecting on the challenges brought about by the COVID19 pandemic, in 2020, the world continued to transform, as did the changing financial landscape with increasing competition for limited resources. These changes demanded agility and effective positioning by all stakeholders especially LDCs in order to achieve the SDGs. There was increasing need for more resources to LDCs. Responding and adapting to COVID remained a challenge, however. The Technology Bank would strive to continue supporting the LDCs, whose situation had worsened following the pandemic. In this matter, he referred to the global community's responsibility to ensure that the LDCs received support towards eradicating poverty, accelerating structural transformation, building both productive capacities and economic resilience. The Technology Bank through science, technology and innovation as well as continued coordination within and across the UN, could support LDCs in achieving the objectives of the IPOA.

Finally, the Technology Bank expressed support for the draft ToRs for the IACG to maximize synergies and complementarities across and within the UN.

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux, Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, noted that, in light of the multiple challenges to the LDCs induced by the pandemic, enhanced coordination and coherence of efforts would be key in supporting the LDCs to build back better. UNESCO had provided over USD 17 million to LDCs in response to the pandemic by supporting the continuation of education and the provision of distance education means and capacities, open science and international cooperation in science, access to culture and creativity, and fighting the misinformation regarding the pandemic. UNESCO was currently in the process of preparation of its next Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022-2025. He noted that in her preliminary proposals, the Director-General highlighted the importance for the organization to intensify its support to the LDCs. Africa should continue to be a Global Priority for UNESCO, while SIDS would be a priority target group. If Member States endorsed these Proposals, UNESCO would focus its human and financial resources in support

of these groups of countries during 2022-2029. Therefore, UNESCO intended to play a very active role in the preparatory process leading up to LDC5 and at the Conference itself.

The organization would in particular take into account lessons learned so far from UNESCO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as data from UNESCO's Global Reports, in particular the Global Education Monitoring Report. At the global level, UNESCO intended to organize several important events of relevance on: the importance of ensuring continued investment in inclusive education at all levels, including STEM education, and in particular girls education; the power of culture and heritage that should be leveraged as a powerful force for building resilience, creativity and social cohesion in the LDCs; and the best practices in UNESCO's designated sites (Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks and World Heritage Sites) for integrated ecosystem management and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

At the regional level, UNESCO would also mobilize its field offices and organize regional events in conjunction with the regional review meetings in UNESCO's fields of competence. The organization would also publish a comprehensive publication providing key data and indicators in UNESCO's fields of competence and highlighting best practices in the LDCs.

Concerning the Draft Terms of Reference, UNESCO considered them to be comprehensive, providing a good basis for reinforced inter-agency cooperation and synergies in support of the LDCs. UNESCO considered that the establishment of open-ended thematic ad hoc working groups or task forces on thematic and region-specific topics to be an interesting modality to this endeavor and would like to know more about practical means on how this type of mechanism could be proposed and established.

Mr. Chi Dung Duong, Director of Division for Least Developed Countries, DALDC, WIPO, stressed that WIPO would be responsive and proactive to find creative means to continue its support for its LDC Member States, while focusing on sustainable impact. Upon assumption of his role, WIPO's new Director General Mr. Daren Tang had underlined that special attention must be given to developing countries and the LDCs in WIPO's work towards building an inclusive global IP ecosystem that serves the interests of all countries and their stakeholders. WIPO had been contributing to the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the IPoA through implementing WIPO Deliverables for LDCs, which was a set of priority thematic areas for cooperation with LDCs as identified by LDCs' Ministers on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The key priority elements of WIPO Deliverables for 2011-2020 were the following: intellectual property and innovation policies and strategies; developing human technical skills; facilitating access to knowledge and building a knowledge infrastructure; Technology and Innovation Support Centers; branding; documentation and digitization of traditional knowledge; and national capacity building based on needs assessment.

For the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs, WIPO planned to organize two Regional Forums for LDCs in Africa and Asia-Pacific, and one Inter-Regional Forum in Geneva to review the implementation of the "WIPO Deliverables for LDCs for 2011-2020", discuss and take inputs from relevant stakeholders of LDCs on identifying key areas of deliverables of WIPO to implement in the years ahead after the Fifth Conference. The potential dates of these forums

would depend on the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The priority issues identified from the above forums would be incorporated into New WIPO's Deliverables for LDCs, to be implemented for the next Decade 2021-2031 along with the new Programme of Action for LDCs. They would be presented at the WIPO High-level Forum, which would be organized during the Fifth UN LDCs Conference in Doha, Qatar.

With regard to the publications for the review meetings of the IPoA and WIPO Forums, WIPO planned to present the report of the implementation of WIPO Deliverables for LDCs in relation to the Istanbul Programme of Action, as well as the Publications on WIPO Success Stories on using Patent Information as a Source of Appropriate Technologies for Addressing the Development Needs of Least Developed Countries. The WIPO Division for LDCs had submitted the input on how WIPO has been supporting LDCs in the context of the Istanbul Programme of Action and what kind of development-oriented activities the organization had delivered to LDCs to the "Report on Best Practices on United Nations Support to the Least Developed Countries" compiled by the OHRLLS.

Mr. Roland Mollerus, Chief, Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy, DESA, stated that the Committee for Development Policy was holding and going ahead with the triannual review of the list of LDCs in February 2021. He thanked OHRLLS for circulating DESA's request for input to organizations for the comprehensive study on the impact of COVID-19 on the LDC category and on graduating countries. This study would be reviewed by the CDP and would be presented in the CDP report to ECOSOC, as mandated. He highlighted the importance for DESA and for the triannual review and graduation process to receive inputs on time, so they could be incorporated before the review.

On LDC5, he referred to the CDP recommendation to use "productive capacity" as an overarching framework, which was in line with other speakers' lines of action, such as UNCTAD and EIF. He expressed DESA's interest in a preparatory meeting focusing on graduation. Regarding LDC5 itself, DESA was in discussion with colleagues from other entities, such as WTO, EIF, UNCTAD and ITC, first to present a new trade information system for LDCs, and second on a thematic study on the garment sector. The CDP was also working on improving support for graduating countries. A final issue that the CDP hoped to present prior to and at LDC5, was work on improving the monitoring framework of countries that were in the process of graduating and countries that had graduated.

Related to publications, after the plenary in February 2021, DESA would work on a revised version of the LDC handbook, including indicators covering the comprehensive review that DESA had been requested to do carry out. Moreover, in collaboration with OHRLLS, a smooth transitions strategy guidelines and templates were being developed, to guide countries through the process.

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy Development, Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service, OHRLLS, took over the chairing of the meeting and moderated the remainder of the session.

Ms. Angélica Jácome, Director of the Office of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), FAO, stated that following years of steady decline, hunger- as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment- in LDCs was on the rise. The aforementioned increase was observed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reversing this alarming trend therefore, requires strengthened collaboration and partnerships, and LDC5 will provide an opportunity to consolidate efforts to achieve the SDGs. The United Nations Food Systems Summit and the FAO Conference will both be held in 2021. These important events will provide important inputs to the LDC5 process. FAO has already contributed to the regional preparatory process of LDC5 – through ESCWA– highlighting the main challenges faced by Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen, as well as solutions to mitigate crises and emerging challenges that could derail progress in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Concerning FAO’s flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative, 30 countries have been confirmed thus far, of which 17 are LDCs.¹

Mr. Shaukat Abdulrazak, Director of the Division for Africa, IAEA, informed the meeting that the IAEA continued to address the specific needs of the LDC Member States of the IAEA (27 in Africa, 8 in Asia and Pacific and 1 in Caribbean). The focus areas of IAEA’s technical cooperation in these Member States were peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology in food and agriculture, health & nutrition, water & environment, energy, industry, and safety and security. Human resource development and nuclear knowledge management were key factors in the application of nuclear science and technology for socio-economic development. LDCs were supported in capacity building through short term and long academic programmes to build a critical mass of scientists in the above-mentioned areas.

LDCs would benefit from the implementation of two flagship Agency programmes, the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) to strengthen Member States’ capacities to prepare for and respond to future zoonotic disease threats and outbreaks, and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme (MSCFP) which was open to female students at the postgraduate level to help build up gender-balanced capacities in nuclear disciplines as well as non-proliferation in IAEA Member States.

IAEA stood ready to support the substantial reviews on all IPoA priorities and to observe and contribute to the sessions of the PrepCom, would ensure continued support and participation to LDCs and OHRLLS in the consultative process for a renewed partnership.

¹ As of 17 November 2020.

Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, Chief, Department, Partnerships for Digital Development Department & ICT Development Fund Administrator, Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), ITU, outlined that, while in developed countries, most people were online with close to 87% of individuals using the Internet, in LCDs, only 19% of individuals were online by end of 2019. In the IPoA, the target for LDCs was to achieve 100% Internet access and use by 2020. As the lack of ICT skills was a barrier to effective Internet use in LDCs, ITU was working to support LDCs through capacity building and skills development to get more people and businesses particularly Small and Medium Enterprises to benefit from the information society through greater use of the Internet. In 2018, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development set as a target for 2025 that entry-level broadband services should be made affordable in developing countries, corresponding to less than 2 % of monthly GNI per capita. In 2019, a mobile-broadband subscription with 1.5 GB package cost less than 2 per cent of GNI per capita in 89 countries, including four LDCs. Cost remained an issue in LDCs. Affordability of broadband was critical especially now, with COVID-19, when all countries have had to go virtual.

There were a number of different ITU Projects in support of LDCs and other developing countries. The ITU International Center of Digital Innovation, to be based in Geneva, would have two main objectives of first helping LDC Member States integrate telecommunication/ICT innovation into their national development agendas, and second, mainstreaming innovation in their work, notably to strengthen the capability to provide support to LDCs and other developing countries. The Connect2Recover project would implement an investigation into the current situation and pressure caused by the increased use of digital services during the COVID-19 pandemic on telecommunication networks, the use and provision of digital services during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, as well as plan and carry out a pilot project to improve connectivity and digital services in beneficiary countries. The *GIGA* was a joint initiative between ITU and UNICEF aimings to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information, opportunity, and choice. Anchored in the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation's stating that by "2030 every adult should have affordable access to digital networks", it called for "a broad, multi-stakeholder alliance, involving the UN, create a platform for sharing digital public goods". The project "*Ensuring continuity of learning for the most vulnerable children and youth with a pilot in Senegal*" aimed to complement the joint-project proposal prepared and submitted by 4 UN agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and ITU) to address the impact of school closures and educational institutions and ensure that the right to education for all children in Senegal is upheld. The activities that would be undertaken by ITU within this project would focus on the provision of internet access to vulnerable and disadvantaged girls in secondary education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) learners in hard-to-reach areas. ITU had launched the project *Digital Transformation Centers project* for developing countries and LDCs, to reduce the persisting digital divide, especially considering the excluded populations from the digital world, notably those living in rural and underserved communities, low-income households, women and girls and other marginalized groups. Finally, ITU was in the process of preparing for its World Telecommunication Development Conference to be held in November 2021 in Addis Ababa. ITU had launched a roadmap to that big event which would include a series of Regional Preparatory Meetings. Concerning the timing of this event, the outputs of the World Telecommunication Conference would feed into LDC-V.

Mr. Youssef Chaitani, Chief of Section, Economic Affairs, ESCWA, echoed previous speakers when affirming that the financing gap continued to be one of the main obstacles to development in LDCs. Arab LDCs were no exception but they were also exposed to the devastation of conflict, in addition to the pandemic and multiple compounding challenges. At the same time, Arab states in the Gulf region were significant contributors, notably through directing financing of the development of infrastructures and of socio-economic projects across the region. Arab donors were also significant donors of humanitarian aid.

As part of the preparatory process for the Doha conference, ESCWA was finalizing a project that would focus mainly on two areas: aid and the humanitarian development nexus. In this matter, different challenges relating to aid were being examined both from the perspective of the donors and of the recipient countries. The study would also focus on the aid architecture in Arab LDCs, as peace remains elusive in many of these countries. As such, the study would look into policy options, and make recommendations in implementing a human development approach in support of enhancing resilience, peace and recovery. To this end, ESCWA had initiated bilateral discussions with Arab LDCs (Sudan, Mauritania, Yemen and Somalia), and would be facilitating regional meetings that bring together donors and recipients.

Farhad Peikar, International Affairs Officer, World Bank, stated that with the end of the IPOA and looking ahead towards LDC5, from the World Bank perspective, it was important that the different entities continue working together to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs. The most recent World Bank projections in the context of the ongoing pandemic, point towards a contraction in the economic activity of around 5 percent this year, which was the most important recession since WWII. The realities that LDCs face were harsh, and could result in moving backwards on the SDGs path, as the poverty rate was rising for the first time in more than 20 years. Nearly all children were out of school, and many may not return. Government revenues were falling, risks of conflict and instability were on the rise; and a food crisis is looming in several LDCs. Given these challenges, supporting the poorest countries and the fight against COVID-19, was the World Bank's priority. The World Bank crisis response targets 4 key areas: saving lives; protecting the poor and vulnerable; ensuring sustainable growth and job creation; and strengthening policies, institutions and investments to build better.

Several examples were provided of the World Bank's work in LDCs. For instance in Haiti and The Gambia, the were provided was providing financing for early disease detection, tracing and medical equipment. In Yemen the World Bank provided medical supplies, training, as well as the rehabilitating and upgrading of existing health facilities. In Senegal, the World Bank was providing financing for disease surveillance systems, public health laboratories and designated facilities to contain and treat infected cases.

The World Bank was making good progress towards the target of \$160 billion financing, much of it which goes to the poorest countries, including LDCs, in the form of grants or low rate, long maturity loans; financing packages designated for countries to expand healthcare systems; and social safety nets. Moreover, the World Bank private sector entities IFC and

MIGA, together committed \$53 billion in COVID-19, much of it to help immediate private sector needs during the crisis, including trade finance and working capital. Finally, as countries look to secure and deploy a vaccine, the World Bank was rolling out a package of \$12 billion to help low and middle-income countries gain access and distribute COVID-19, tests, treatments and vaccines.

Mr. Paul Desanker, Manager, Adaptation Division, UNFCCC, stressed the importance of 2020 for climate change, with the aim of countries putting forward more ambitious climate action plans through revised NDCs, the scaling up of climate finance to \$100 billion per year, the vision for LDCs to have their NAPs in place to inform adaptation action and resilience-building. All these contribute to the important stage for the Programme of Action for the LDCs.

As the Climate Dialogues were approaching instead of the postponed COP this year, there were a number of events and reports that highlight the issues related to support to LDCs on climate change. The mandate of the LDC Expert Group (LEG), a cornerstone of support to the LDCs on CC, would be reviewed. The LEG would present an update on its work for the year, mainly centered around production of NAPs and efforts to implement adaptation priorities identified through the GCF. The LDC Group would convene an event on their own initiatives, at which the USG OHRLS would deliver a keynote opening address.

Progress in the LDCs was still very slow, despite efforts to provide technical support, especially since COVID-19 has disrupted normal channels of provision of support. Indeed, only 5 LDCs had submitted a NAP out of 20, and this number has not changed much last few years. 20 LDCs out of 57 developing countries had managed to access and receive the USD 3 million in support from the GCF for the formulation of NAPs (while 12 LDCs were being processed, leaving another 15 LDCs yet to submit proposals). Only 2 LDCs had received approval of their projects in NAPs for implementation and another 9 projects (some with multiple LDCs) were in submission. Projects could take up to 36 months, and in rare cases, just a few months (although for most, the time was 9 to 20 months).

Newer approaches are gaining traction. The LEG was implementing an Open NAP Initiative, designed to provide direct support to countries. At least 10 LDCs were expected to submit their NAPs in next 6 months. To facilitate access to the GCF, the LEG was designing a proposal writing activity, designed to produce project proposals to be submitted to the GCF to implement adaptation actions. The UNFCCC had recently signed a MoU with UNDRR to promote coherence between disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation, and aimed at providing direct support to several LDCs in co-developing national efforts that maximize synergy between the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. The NAP technical working group was a platform for all technical support organizations, UN, IGOs, NGOs, etc. to promote coordinated technical guidance.

The main guiding principles were of co-production; leaving no-one behind; maintaining deliverables in spite of COVID-19; vertically integrated support from assessment to design of programmes and subsequent support to implementation; reliance on endogenous expertise; bridging the digital divide; and ensuring full integration with SDGs.

Several contributions were envisaged to the LDC5 process. A publication produced for LDC4 was being updated, *“Reducing vulnerability to climate change, land degradation and loss of biodiversity in the LDCs”*, to capture latest findings on key climate risks and vulnerabilities in the LDCs, and how efforts under the NAPs are contributing towards successful adaptation and resilience-building; together with an online NAP Tracking Tool with metrics on NAPs, support needs, support being provided, etc. Efforts are being scaled up under the Open NAP initiative, engaging many UN partners to join in this effort to ensure LDCs are assisted to co-produce their NAPs and that they are not left behind. At least 10 NAPs are expected to be submitted in the next 6 months, and the rest by COP 26 at the end of 2021. Efforts are also being scaled up to support the LDCs submit proposals to the GCF for implementation. To this end, a series of proposal writing workshops will be launched, jointly with the GCF and delivery partners, to ensure every LDC has at least one project funded under the GCF related to their NAP. A special session in preparation for LDC5 is planned at the NAP Expo in early April, which hopefully will be in person in Gaborone, Botswana. This would be an opportunity to consolidate priorities on adaptation. An online course has been designed on addressing the Paris Agreement in the LDCs, which is undergoing final testing before a launch scheduled for the first quarter of next year. Under the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, the Santiago Network that was decided at COP 25 in Madrid last December, was launched in June 2020, and would be developed further to mobilize technical assistance in addressing loss and damage, notably in LDCs, SIDS and other vulnerable countries. A survey had been conducted to assemble technical assistance needs, with 15 responses received so far, and more inputs expected during the Climate Dialogues later that month.

Mr. Massimiliano La Marca, Senior Economist, Multilateral Cooperation Department, ILO, reiterated ILO’s commitment to the preparation of LDC5. He mentioned the conference, jointly organized by ILO and OHRLLS on the 19 November “Leaving no one behind and building back better from COVID-19”, which would focus on the future of work for LDCs and on the impacts of COVID-19 on the labor market and how it reshapes the global value chain; the work landscape; as well as resulting challenges and potential opportunities. The conference was expected to provide insights for a future report on LDCs, in contribution to the preparation of LDC5.

Ms. Aissatou Diallo, Senior Country Manager and LDC Focal Point, ITC, noted that ITC had continued its engagement with LDCs in Asia and in Africa. Since the beginning of the pandemic ITC had reviewed its business models, working closely with business support organizations on the ground to deliver jointly ITC’s trade related technical assistance services. Micro-enterprises and SMEs constitute the main clients of ITC. The latter had undertaken 19 surveys in 19 LDCs across Africa and Asia to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on MSMEs, which constitute 90% of businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa. The feedback received from the surveys conducted was that government and development institutions needed to significantly expand existing efforts to help MSMEs survive the crisis and help minimize job losses. More creative steps were required to enable MSMEs to have access to finance, so that they could revitalize their cash flows and ensure a minimum level of production; together with ensuring food security. The issue of e-commerce was also highlighted in the survey. Based on the surveys’ results, ITC was able to continue its support in a number of countries

in Africa - including The Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and South Sudan. The support focused on helping MSMEs, entrepreneurs, and communities to connect with market opportunities or new market opportunities that have emerged from COVID-19 crisis, for instance on urban logistics, digital marketing and e-commerce. Focusing predominantly on domestic and regional opportunities. ITC had started a new project funded by the EU in the Central African Republic to help set up rural agricultural cooperatives, to boost local production of food crops, and to connect the product with the domestic market. ITC would be working closely with the World Food Programme on that matter, to address food prices in some rural areas in Central African Republic.

ITC had also organized a number of webinars in Africa, especially in LDCs, with the view to sensitizing the private sector on the opportunities that the African Continental Free Trade Area would offer. This was why, in the upcoming new programme the One Trade Africa, which would be launched in January 2021, ITC would have a dedicated chapter on how to help LDCs benefit from the new single market.

In Asia, in Myanmar and Bhutan, ITC was supporting e-commerce policy development. In both countries, ITC had provided remote coaching and training for SMEs to access market opportunities in Asia and beyond. In Cambodia, ITC has undertaken a SME competitiveness survey to assess the impact of COVID-19, on business generation and employment. A similar exercise was done for Nepal, among others.

With regard to LDC5 contributions, ITC was planning a side event on innovation, e-commerce and entrepreneurship in LDC, and in addition ITC aimed at preparing a publication on how to increase participation of enterprises and entrepreneurs, especially young women and men in LDCs, in the new Africa continental market.

Ms. Sylvia Hordosch, Policy Adviser, Intergovernmental Support, UN Women, stressed that gender equality and empowerment of women was one of the core principles for action in the IPoA.

The Political Declaration of the Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs strengthened gender-equality related language on agriculture, climate change and disaster risk reduction, discrimination, economic empowerment, leadership and participation, education, financing, global partnership, mainstreaming gender equality, poverty and productive capacity building. Additionally, the proposal to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women across all policies and programmes was strengthened to include targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies. Accordingly, the outcome of LDC5 ought to build on and expand these key points. While the past years had seen some progress toward gender equality the world is facing an unprecedented set of challenges that threaten progress for women and girls which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2030 Agenda was clear: development will only be sustainable if its benefits accrued equally to both women and men. Fundamental shifts in the global gender equality landscape had taken place over the last few years. Economic security and autonomy remained elusive

for most women, especially in child-bearing years. Overall, there was a sense that the gains of development had not been shared equally, while economic insecurity prevailed for the many. Increasing push-back against women's rights occurred not only through regressive policy reforms, but also through a less visible hollowing out of institutions mandated to advance gender equality. Rapid technological change was impacting every aspect of economic, social and political life, creating new opportunities as well as new risks.

This year's 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action had identified a number of key priorities that were relevant for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in LDCs. These included:

1. Make the economy work for women and sustainable: extend labour rights and social protection; invest in the care economy; address labour market segregation; and support women entrepreneurs.
2. Accelerate the participation of women, including young women, in political and economic decision-making and in participation in natural resource management. Create enabling environments for women's rights organizations to hold decision-makers to account.
3. Harness the potential of technology for gender equality. Close the gender digital divide.
4. Match commitments to gender equality with adequate financing for gender equality.
5. Remove discriminatory laws and strengthen institutions for gender equality.
6. Transform social norms to create cultures of non-violence, respect and equality.
7. Reach the most marginalized groups of women and girls, and ensure no one is left behind. Make marginalized groups of women and girls visible through data disaggregation and ensuring their meaningful participation in policy and programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is at the centre of these efforts.
8. Close data and evidence gaps to monitor progress for women and girls more effectively.

She noted that a number of resources were available including: the [World Survey on Women in Development](#) which focused on women's time poverty and income poverty; the [Synthesis SG report on Beijing +25](#); [national reports for Beijing+25](#); the [UN Women data hub](#) with country fact sheets; and the [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#).

She confirmed that UN Women would support the LDC5 conference and its regional preparatory meetings; produce analysis and prepare knowledge products – with a focus on gender data in LDCs; organize a briefing for delegations in NY prior to negotiations; and follow and influence intergovernmental negotiations to build and expand on existing gender equality commitments in the Istanbul Programme of Action.

Mr. Casper Sonesson, Policy Advisor, UNCDF, highlighted three overall ways in which UNCDF planned to contribute to LDC5 preparations, beyond the daily data work to support LDCs, as an agency fully dedicated for this purpose.

Firstly, UNCDF was preparing a number of studies and publications to inform LDC5, notably to raise awareness on LDCs key financing issues. UNCDF was finalizing a report on *"Blended finance in the LDCs"*, also published in 2018 and 2019 with OECD and other partners. This 2020 report included updated data on the state of blended finance in LDCs. Among others,

the report showed that LDCs continued to receive the lowest share of only 6% of all private finance mobilized by official development finance - although the total volume continued to increase and the number of LDCs that benefitted from blended finance was also increasing. The report also included a chapter on the role that blended finance could play in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and priority sectors to focus on. It includes some 12 expert guest articles on different aspects of how blended finance could work better for LDCs, and it also included a proposed action agenda for advancing blended finance in LDCs. The report would be launched in December. A series of events would be convened during the Spring to present and discuss findings, including with LDC Governments and UN Missions. Another piece of research completed this year was a survey of more than 2400 MSMEs in all 47 LDCs to understand how Covid-19 was affecting them. In addition, UNCDF was preparing a report on “*Building Inclusive Digital Economies in LDCs*” and another on “*Local Government Finance in LDCs*”, which would also be shared as inputs to the LDC5 preparatory discussions.

Secondly, UNCDF would prepare its next 4-year Strategic Framework during 2021 for the period 2022-2025. Considering that UNCDF’s mandate was to focus primarily on supporting LDCs, it was important to explore how to best align the new framework closely with the next LDC PoA. In 2021, consultations with Member States would be convened, including LDC Governments, UN entities, other partners, to receive inputs on the role UNCDF should play in the next 4 years to best support LDCs. UNCDF expected that the new Strategy would build on and adapt current focus on supporting LDCs in the areas of 1) digital financial inclusion and inclusive digital economies; 2) strengthening access to development and climate finance at the local level for local authorities and municipalities; and 3) providing catalytic investment capital (loans and guarantees) for SMEs and small investment projects.

Finally, UNCDF intended to participate in and contribute to the LDC5 preparatory meetings including the regional reviews as needed. For example, a session in the Africa Regional Review this year on “last mile SDG finance” was originally scheduled, which would be maintained if interest and demand for this is expressed.

Mr. Diego Valadares Vasconcelos Neto, Focal point for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Right to Development Section, OHCHR, noted the several events and reports in which OHCHR is involved regarding the LDC 5 conference. Among joint activities in 2020, he highlighted the OHRLLS keynote speech during the OHCHR Social Forum, focusing on the theme of poverty and inequality, including inequalities among countries, bringing to the debate the issues of climate change. He referred to further possible joint collaboration in 2021 on events of the Human Rights Council, including the “one day seminar on the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all human rights” ([A/HRC/RES/41/19](#), para.14) and two hours meeting of State representatives on “mutually beneficial cooperation on poverty alleviation to promote and protect human rights” ([A/HRC/RES/43/21](#), para.8). He mentioned OHCHR cooperation in implementing studies on the contribution of development to human rights ([A/HRC/RES/41/19](#), para.13), including the current consultancy conducted with Ms. Berhan Taye on Access to the Broadband in African LDCs and its contribution to human rights. He expressed interest in putting in touch OHCHR’s consultant with the ITU colleagues. He presented the key messages of the latest report of the Secretary General and High Commissioner for Human Rights on the *Right to Development*, with an analytical part focusing

expressly on LDCs, and aiming to frame it as a contribution to UN LDC5 (document [A/HRC/45/21](#)), including section III with recommendations. Among others, the report addressed human rights mechanisms language and the graduation criteria, promoting productive capacity from a human right lenses, a strong participatory process in LDC5, as well as giving the voice to LDCs in what will be the new Programme of Action.

Mr. Manuel Mattiat, Programme Officer, UNIDO, confirmed UNIDO's continued reinforcement of the implementation of technical cooperation activities as well as partnership approaches to accelerate industrialization in LDCs and pave the way towards upcoming events in preparation of LDC5. UNIDO had reviewed the implementation of its Operational Strategy for LDCs (2012-2020) assessing UNIDO's contribution to the implementation of the IPoA and lessons learnt going into the next programme of action. He expressed UNIDO's support on cooperation for joint side events during the LDC5 preparatory process and the Conference, for instance on the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and new technologies in LDCs. He proposed as an example, to present the findings of the UNIDO Industrial Development Report (IDR) 2020 in LDCs, to better understand the emergence and diffusion of advanced digital production (ADP) technologies.

He indicated that despite the negative impacts caused by the pandemic, data from UNIDO's Statistics Portal has shown that some LDCs show positive signals in their industrial development in past years (such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Myanmar), while others show a contraction of their industrial sector (such as Benin, Bhutan and The Gambia). The manufacturing value added had generally risen in developing countries' GDP. However, there were large disparities between regions and within LDCs' industrial development. UNIDO, in partnership with other agencies and partners, had conducted several assessments of COVID-19 impact on industries and specifically SMEs. These surveys were implemented in multiple LDCs, such as DRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia, and supported the Government's efforts in formulating socio-economic policies and recovery measures. Furthermore, UNIDO continued the implementation of its Programme for Country Partnerships (PCP) including in 5 LDCs (Ethiopia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Senegal and Zambia) and its Country Programmes under different stages of implementation in 22 LDCs, to accelerate industrial development and structural transformation in cooperation with public and private partners. In the context of the PCP model, current discussions with UNECA were exploring ways to join efforts to support countries' industrialization policies in support of the AfCFTA implementation.

Regarding the organization of the African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification to be held in 2021, in Niger, UNIDO, UNECA, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and Afro-Champions were the main collaborators. The same partners were currently organizing the Africa Industrialization Week, which would gather high-level representatives from the UN Secretariat, development partners, and the private sector to discuss a multitude of topics around the Agreement establishing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), including themes such as pharmaceutical production, agro-industrial parks, SMEs and start-ups development, innovative financing, industry 4.0, industrial property rights, blue economy, and many others. A Roadmap for next year's Summit and a High-Level

Political Declaration were expected to be issued in guiding Africa's industrialization, including perspectives for the industrialization of the 33 African LDCs.

Ms. Petal Thomas, Multilateral and Intergovernmental Affairs, Specialist Policy and Strategy Division, UNFPA, indicated that UNFPA has started to produce a report on Girls Secondary School Education and the linkages with child-bearing within all LDCs. That report would refer to recommendations to advance opportunities for investment and young people. This would constitute the main contribution of UNFPA to LDC5.

Ms. Elle Wang, Partnerships Advisor, UNOPS New York Liaison Office, highlighted in a written statement a number of activities in support of LDCs carried out by UNOPS. In terms of emergency procurement, since the onset of the pandemic, UNOPS had been leveraging its expertise and supporting LDCs in all regions of the world to help ensure their access to critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment, as well as providing optimal routings to ensure best delivery options for its partners, to stop the spread of the virus and ramp up testing and treatment capabilities. For instance, to support the government of Chad's COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Project, UNOPS had partnered with the World Bank to procure and deliver \$8 million worth of essential medical equipment for the Ministry of Public Health, for distribution to all regional hospitals in the country.

On the socio-economic recovery front, UNOPS was focusing its efforts on mitigating the devastating impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable populations and on preserving LDCs' development gains. From supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable communities, improving internet connectivity, to strengthening MSME and government capacity, UNOPS worked directly with local populations, businesses and governments to alleviate the short- and long-term socio-economic effects of the crisis. As an example, in Myanmar, the UNOPS-managed Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) and Myanmar's Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement's Department of Social Welfare announced \$9 million in funding for social protection payments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mothers of children under the age of 2, pregnant women and people over the age of 85 who were participating in social protection programmes initially piloted by LIFT, received a one-off cash payment of 30,000 Myanmar kyats, starting the first week of June. Another example was a project in Ethiopia, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and with more than \$7 million in funding from the World Bank, where UNOPS was helping to establish satellite connectivity for approximately 1,500 high schools across the country, to help mitigate the disruption of education during the pandemic.

Moreover, as the only UN agency with a General Assembly given mandate on infrastructure, UNOPS was committed to supporting LDCs gain a better understanding of how they could improve their infrastructure planning, delivery and management practices in support of the implementation of the IPoA. Indeed, effective infrastructure was crucial for ensuring the availability of critical health services. UNOPS could provide LDCs with temporary or permanent infrastructure solutions for health facilities and essential supporting services. To access adequate care, patients need access to roads, and in turn, hospitals rely on screening and triage facilities, expanded emergency treatment centers, waste and water management

and adequate energy supply for the operation of life saving equipment. In this matter, UNOPS implemented in Myanmar the construction and equipping of 33 health centers in 4 townships. The Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports moved the HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria sections of the Myawaddy District Hospital and Kawkareik District Hospital to these health centers, to free up space and capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening the working methods of the IACG: TORs of the IACG

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy Development, Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service, OHRLLS, introduced the revised draft Terms of Reference (TORs) of the IACG on LDCs that all participants had received beforehand. The Chief recalled some of the underlying features. He noted that OIOS had recently conducted an evaluation of the UN-OHRLLS, and one of the main recommendations coming out of the review was that OHRLLS, in consultation with IACG members, should strengthen the IACGs, as a mechanism for coordination around the Programme of Action. He noted that the main intention of the recommendation was that the IACG go beyond being a discussion platform and a consultative group, and instead enhance the coordination and collaboration on activities of importance to the LDCs. He emphasized that the TORs aimed to provide the framework to make the IACG a more effective collaboration mechanism to serve the implementation of the LDC Programme of Action. The TORs were based on the experience of the SIDS inter-agency consultative group who had adopted their own TORs recently. The efforts to develop the TORs were within the spirit of the broader reforms of the UN Development System, in line with the efforts striving for better coordination within the System.

He briefly highlighting the elements of the ToRs. As a starting point, the introduction focused on the history of the IACG and provided the rationale for the development of the ToR.

Following the introduction, Section 1 focused on the functions of the IACG. He noted in particular that the IACG should focus not only on sharing and exchanging information but should also identify areas for enhanced collaboration, including joint activities and inter-agency projects amongst relevant and interested organizations. The IACG would also continue to be utilized to facilitate coordinated and inclusive preparations of the SG report on the implementation of the IPoA and other documents.

Section 2 of the TOR focused on the membership of the IACG. As several participants specifically suggested to include a list of member organizations of the IACG, there would be a dedicated page for the IACG on the new OHRLLS website, where the TORs will be uploaded, as well as including a list of the member organizations of the IACG, and reports of inter-agency meetings.

Section 3 outlines the modalities of operation of the IACG. In line with existing practice, the meetings of the IACG would be held twice a year, or more frequently if necessary. OHRLLS would continue to facilitate the organization of the IACG meetings and preparation of the summary reports, which will also be posted on the dedicated IACG website, together with any key documents.

The Chief thanked participants for their engagement in the consultative exercise and noted that many were in agreement with the way the ToRs were drafted. He specified that the comments and suggestions that were provided have been carefully considered and appropriately incorporated into the revised ToRs, enhancing the document. He concluded his introduction by thanking participants for their suggestions and inviting participants to adopt the TORs. As no additional comment was made, he declared the Terms of Reference to be adopted (see Annex I).

Closing remarks

Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, delivered concluding remarks in which she stressed the importance of maintaining and stepping-up efforts to address the challenges related to the many impacts of the current prolonged crisis. The international community expected the group to provide adequate, effective and timely assistance to the LDCs. LCD5 and its preparatory process offered a strategic opportunity to support the LDCs. The High Representative thanked all participants for their strong engagement and commitment announced for the preparatory process for LDC5. The considerable breadth of the Programme of Action for the LDCs called for specialized inputs and technical expertise, which would be critical both in identifying the successes as well as shortcomings of the past decade, and in shaping strategic directions for the future.

She highlighted that such a programme must produce concrete outcomes and provide special assistance to the most vulnerable countries, especially faced with the severe impacts of COVID-19 on LDCs. OHRLLS was committed to keeping all participants updated on the dates of the two regional preparatory meetings. She emphasized that the adoption of the Terms of Reference of the IACG on LDCs at this meeting was intended to increase the focus and efficiency of the IACG, including through increased thematic focus, and result in concrete outcomes that would help to move forward on key areas. The High Representative further emphasized how the IATF on LDC Graduation has turned out to be a useful tool, with a recent meeting dedicated to support for the Solomon Islands. She underlined once again the importance of those efforts, especially considering that there were 12 LDCs in the graduation pipeline, and against the backdrop of the heavy toll of the pandemic on trade, exports, debt, and tourism. Before adjourning the meeting, she noted that OHRLLS would convene the next session of the IATF on LDC Graduation with a dedicated focus on Sao Tome and Principe.

Annex I: Terms of Reference of the IACG for LDCs

Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Terms of Reference

Introduction

The Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010 emphasized the important role of different entities of the UN system in implementation and follow-up at the national, regional and global levels. The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA) requested the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action and to integrate it into their work programmes, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates.²

One of the functions of UN-OHRLLS upon its establishment by the UN General Assembly in 2001 through its resolution 56/227, and as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report A/56/645, is the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system, with a view to facilitating the coordinated implementation of and coherence in the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries at the country, regional and global levels. This mandate is also reflected in the IPoA³. In line with its mandate, UN-OHRLLS has since its inception convened and chaired the meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on LDCs.

The IACG has proved to be an effective and efficient tool for well-coordinated and coherent follow-up to the implementation of the Programmes of Action for the LDCs, as well as for the undertaking of joint initiatives of the wider UN system in support of the LDCs, and can further promote coherence with the implementation of the major agreed intergovernmental documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. There is, however, scope for further improvement of the IACG mechanism. The 2019 evaluation undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommended that UN-OHRLLS strengthen the IACG as a mechanism of coordination around implementation of the Programme of Action. The present Terms of Reference (TORs) have been developed in this context, with a view to strengthening the IACG. The TORs set out the main functions and working methods of the IACG on LDCs.

1. Main functions of the IACG

- 1.1. Provide a forum for representatives of its member organizations to meet regularly to exchange information with regard to their work on LDCs, including critical issues, challenges and opportunities, weaknesses, gaps and best practices on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs.
- 1.2. Identify areas which require enhanced complementarity and synergy, to curb duplication of activities of member agencies/organizations at the national, regional and global levels.
- 1.3. Ensure coherence and maximize synergies and complementarities in the activities of the member organizations in support of LDCs, through various efforts by the UN system at the national, regional and global levels, where appropriate, sharing of planned activities, and developing and

² See A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1, para. 153.

³ See A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1, para. 155.

implementing workplans where feasible, bearing in mind their respective comparative advantages, expertise and mandates.

- 1.4. Strengthen discussion, coordination of activities, as well as cooperation among its member organizations based on their respective comparative advantages, relevant mandate and expertise, and with the Group of LDCs in the implementation of activities and replicating and scaling up of best practices for the benefit of LDCs, inter alia, including undertaking, as appropriate, joint inter-agency projects, missions, training and capacity building activities, studies, reports and advocacy activities and other forms of cooperation.
- 1.5. Facilitate coordinated and inclusive preparations of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs and other relevant documents, in line with the relevant mandates, including by inviting comments and contributions by the IACG membership.
- 1.6. Enhance outreach activities to inform member states and other stakeholders about activities conducted by UN agencies for the implementation of the Programme of Action and SDGs in LDCs.
- 1.7. Share work programmes and updated information on IACG activities to the LDCs.
- 1.8. Identify thematic and region-specific topics for discussion and coordination of activities among relevant member organizations. Such thematic workstreams should be time-bound and results-oriented, and could be implemented through the establishment of open-ended ad hoc working groups or task forces.

2. Composition of membership

- 2.1 The membership of the IACG shall consist of United Nations System Organizations, including its departments, regional economic commissions, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and bodies, international and regional financial and development institutions, and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations whose work is relevant to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs. The IACG meetings shall be attended by representatives identified by the Heads of these departments, commissions, agencies and programmes as focal points for LDCs.

3. Modalities of operation

- 3.1 The IACG shall meet on a biannual basis, with additional meetings convened as needed.
- 3.2 The IACG may invite, on an ad-hoc basis, as observers and contributors to its discussions, Government officials, representatives of NGOs, private sector and other entities whose expertise may contribute to the IACG's work.
- 3.3 IACG member organizations are responsible for covering the costs, within their existing resources, of their participation in the IACG meetings.
- 3.4 In line with its mandate, UN-OHRLLS will facilitate the organization and servicing of the IACG meetings. The relevant information on the work of the IACG, including the record of the proceedings of the IACG meetings, list of members organizations of the IACG, and key documents will be posted and regularly updated on UN-OHRLLS public website.

Annex II: List of participants

Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)

Amb. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director
Mr. Andrey Kuleshov, Strategy and Development Advisor
Mr. Gustavo Katz Braga, Impact Strategy Officer

Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)

Mr. Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Ms. Vivian Okeke, Representative of the Director General to the United Nations,
Director of the IAEA Liaison Office, New York
Mr. Shaukat Abdulrazak, Director of the Division for Africa, Department of Technical
Cooperation (Head of Delegation)
Ms. Jane Gerardo-Abaya, Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific,
Department of Technical Cooperation
Mr. Mickel Edwerd, Head of Africa Section I, Division for Africa, Department of
Technical Cooperation, (IAEA focal point to the IACG)
Mr. Gashaw Gebeyehu Wolde, Head of the Asia and the Pacific Section I, Division for
Asia and the Pacific, Department of Technical Cooperation
Ms. Marina Binti Mishar, Head of the Asia and the Pacific Section 2, Division for Asia
and the Pacific, Department of Technical Cooperation
Mr. Javier Romero, Programme Management Officer

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Ms. Amber Barth, ILO Office in New York
Mr. Massimiliano La Marca, Senior Economist, Multilateral Cooperation Department

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Mr. Robert Powell, Special Representative to the UN, New York Office
Ms. Valerie Guillamo, Senior Liaison Officer to the UN, New York Office

International Trade Centre (ITC)

Ms. Aissatou Diallo, Senior Country Manager and LDC Focal Point
Ms. Riefqah Jappie, ITC Representative to the UN, New York.

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, Chief, Department, Partnerships for Digital Development
Department & ICT Development Fund Administrator, Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)

Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA)

Ms. Cristina Duarte, UN Special Advisor on Africa
Mr. Kava Katjomuise, Senior Programme Officer

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Mr. Diego Valadares Vasconcelos Neto, Focal point for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Right to Development Section

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

Ms. Esther Pan Sloane, Head Partnerships, Policy and Communications

Mr. Casper Sonesson, Policy Advisor

Ms. Laura Sennett, Policy Specialist

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Paul Akiwumi, Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes

Mr. Rolf Traeger, Chief, LDC Section, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes

Mr. Raymond Landveld, Economic Affairs Officer

United Nations Convention on Combatting Desertification (UNCCD)

Ms. Nandhini Iyer Krishna, Deputy Chief of Office, UNCCD Liaison in New York

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Mr. Roland Mollerus, Chief, Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy

Ms. Teresa Lenzi, Economic Affairs Officer, Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy

United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO)

Ms. Nergis Gulasan, Development Coordination Officer, International Financial Institutions, SDG Financing, Policy and Programming Branch

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. Mourad Wahba, Associate Administrator

Mr. Mansour Ndiaye, Head, Inclusive Growth, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)

Mr. Raymond Gilpin, Regional Bureau for Africa, Chief Economist and Head of Strategy

Ms. Luisa Bernal, Policy Advisor on Trade and Sustainable Development

Ms. Rositsa Todorova, Policy Specialist

Ms. Eunice Kamwendo, Regional Bureau for Africa

Ms. Angela Lusigi, Strategic Advisor Regional Bureau for Africa

Ms. Chaltu Daniel Kalbessa, Strategic Analyst

Mr. Jakob Schemel, Country Office Liaison and Coordination Specialist, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA)

Mr. Youness Abouyoub, Chief, Governance and State-Building Section, Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division

Mr. Youssef Chaitani, Chief of Section, Economic Affairs, Beirut Office

Mr. Tarik Alami, Chief of Service, Economic Affairs, Beirut Office

Mr. Joaquin Salido Marcos, Associate Programme Manager

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

Mr. Oliver Paddison, Chief, Countries with Special Needs Section, Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development Division
Mr. Yusuke Tateno, Economic Affairs Officer

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Mr. Bartholomew Armah, Chief of Section, Chief Development Planning, Macroeconomics and Governance Division
Ms. Jane John Mpapalika, Consultant

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr. Jean-Yves Le Saux, Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning
Ms. Iulia Nechifor, Programme Planning Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mr. Satya Tripathi, Assistant Secretary-General
Ms. Mara Angelica Murillo Correa, Senior Programme Management Officer
Ms. Angela Mueni Mwandia, Program Management Officer, Nairobi Officer

United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

Ms. Angélica Jácome, Director, Office for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs
Mr. Matthew Keil, Regional Coordinator, ODG
Ms. Cristina Alderighi, Programme Officer, Office for SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs
Mr. Shen Hong, Liaison Officer, Liaison Office in New York
Ms. Doris Ngirwa-Mpesha, Social and Humanitarian Affairs Advisor, Liaison Office in New York

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Mr. Paul Desanker, Manager, Adaptation Division

United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT)

Ms. Francesca De Ferrari, Programme Management Officer, New York Office

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. Manuel Mattiat, Programme Officer
Ms. Roxana Vataselu, Project Associate

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

Mr. Huw Beynon, Liaison Officer, New York Liaison Office
Ms. Kike Rebecca Lawal, Programme Management Officer, New York Liaison Office

United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

Mr. Juan Carlos Villagran de Leon, Programme Officer, Head, UN-SPIDER Bonn Office
Mr. Markus Woltran, Programme Officer, Office of the Director
Mr. Jorge Vazquez Costa, Programme Management Officer

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Ms. Elle Wang, Partnerships Advisor, UNOPS New York Liaison Office
Ms. Sarah O'Neil, Partnerships Assistant

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Ms. Petal Thomas, Multilateral and Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist, Policy and Strategy Division (PSD)

United Nations Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries

Mr. Joshua Setipa, Director
Mr. Moshe Kao, Programme Management Consultant
Ms. Ingrid Sebudandi, Executive Office Associate

UN Women

Ms. Sylvia Hordosch, Policy Adviser, Intergovernmental Support

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Mr. Chi Dung Duong, Director, Division for Least Developed Countries, Department for Africa and Least Developed Countries (DALDC)
Mr. Purevdorj Vaanchig, Senior Counselor, Division for Least Developed Countries, Department for Africa and Least Developed Countries (DALDC).
Ms. Ola Zahran, Head, WIPO New York Office

World Bank

Mr. Farhad Peikar, International Affairs Officer
Ms. Joelle El Sawalhi, Research Analyst

World Food Programme

Mr. Paul Skoczylas, Deputy Director Division for the UN System and Multilateral Engagement, New York Office
Mr. Moise Ballo, Programme Officer

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Mr. Samiti Siv, Programme Officer, Institutional Relations and Partnerships
Ms. Rosa Ruffo, Partnerships Officer

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Mr. Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division
Mr. Taufiqur Rahman, Head of LDC Unit, Development Division
Mr. Rainer Lanz, Secretary, Sub-Committee on LDCs, Economic Affairs Officer, Development Division

United Nations Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS)

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director
Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief
Ms. Susanna Wolf, Senior Programme Officer, Deputy to the Chief (for LDCs)
Mr. Aniket Ghai, Senior Economic Affairs Officer
Mr. Abdul Alim, Senior Economic Affairs Officer
Mr. Conor O'Loughlin, Information Officer
Ms. Margherita Musollino-Berg, Economic Affairs Officer
Mr. Thomas Manuel Gonzalez Alvarez, Programme Management Officer
Mr. Yeshey Dorji, Programme Management Officer
Ms Shifaana Thowfeequ, Programme Management Officer
Ms. Dagmar Hertova, Programme Management Officer
Mr. Damien Sass, Public Information Officer
Mr. Nicholas Coelin, Associate Expert
Ms. Anne Kersting, Associate Expert
Ms. Oksana Yarashuk, Programme Management Assistant
Ms Julie-Ann Brown, Senior Staff Assistant / Personal Assistant to USG
Ms. Malwina Adrianna Buldys, Consultant
Ms. Marion Pacini, Intern
Mr. Deer Sherifu, Intern

Annex III: Agenda

Twenty-first Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting of the United Nations system and international organizations on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020

17 November 2020, 09:00-12:30

09:00-09:10	Opening remarks by Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
09:10-11:20	Update on the status of preparations for the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs (UNLDC5) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates from UN entities on their planned contributions to LDC5, including thematic events and publications, moderated by Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS and by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS
11:20-11:55	Strengthening the working methods of the IACG: TORs of the IACG <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation followed by moderation by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS
11:55-12:00	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
