

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN THE LDC5 PROCESS

The Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) will take place on 23-27 January 2022 in Doha, Qatar. At this conference, Member States will agree on the next ten-year programme of action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which will help guide policies and support to the LDCs from the UN system and development partners, as well as inform national and local development policies and plans. This outcome document should also help to mobilize civil society and the private sector to advocate, contribute and act in key priority areas.

A comprehensive preparatory process leading up to the LDC5 conference is already underway and will continue until the conference takes place in January 2022. OHRLLS has been designated as the UN's focal point for the LDC5 Conference and therefore plays a coordinating role in all aspects of the organization of the conference and the preparatory process.

General Assembly Resolution 75/227 stressed the importance of effective participation from civil society and invited Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with the ECOSOC in the preparatory process and the LDC5 conference itself. With this in mind, we seek strong engagement from Civil Society representatives from around the world, especially from the Least Developed Countries, to engage in the process to share their experiences and have their voices heard by member states and other stakeholders.

Preparatory Process

The preparatory process for LDC5 is based on country-level, regional and global substantive reviews of all [Istanbul Programme of Action \(IPOA\) priorities](#), involving all major IPOA stakeholders. The outcomes of these inclusive and broad-based reviews feeds into the work of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), whose mandate is to agree on elements of the new Programme of Action for the LDCs that will then be finalised and adopted by the Doha Conference.

The [LDC5 Organizational Session](#), which took place on 8 February 2021, elected Bangladesh and Canada as the two co-Chairs of the LDC5 PrepCom Bureau, with Qatar, Turkey, Malawi, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nepal, Czech Republic, Paraguay and Haiti as the other members of the bureau.

It is meeting according to the following revised schedule:

- 1st session: 24-28 May 2021
- 2nd session: 26-30 July 2021.

Civil society engagement in the two meetings of the Preparatory Committee will be determined by an organization's consultative status with ECOSOC and/or whether or not the organization was accredited for the LDC-IV Conference or the LDC Midterm Review.

Informal Engagements with Civil Society

In addition to the formal meetings, two **regional review meetings** have been scheduled. The [Africa Regional Review](#) (also covering Haiti) was held virtually from 22 to 26 February 2021, hosted by the Government of the Republic of Malawi, as chair of the LDC Group, and the UN-ECA. The meeting adopted a Political Declaration by African LDC Ministers, which outlines components of a renewed partnership for sustainable development between the African LDCs and their development partners. There were over 100 civil society representatives registered to participate in the Africa Regional Review Meeting.

The Asia-Pacific Review is co-organized by OHRLLS with the government of Bangladesh and ESCAP and will take place in hybrid format from 28 June to 2 July 2021.

Both reviews involve all LDCs, their development partners, various UN system entities and civil society stakeholders.

There will also be opportunities for civil society to consult with UN Member States at various moments throughout the preparation process.

The first of such moments will be a consultation led by the co-chairs of the Preparatory Committee in advance of [Session 1, taking place on 20 May 2021](#). An invitation and registration details will be shared with civil society representatives.

There will be other opportunities for civil society to engage and consult with Member States, to be determined as the process moves forward.

LDC5 Conference and Civil Society Forum

The Civil Society Forum, which will take place in parallel to the LDC5 Conference, will serve as key deliberation space of CSOs at the Conference. It will provide a space to coordinate civil society from LDCs, other developing countries and development partners to support the priorities of the people of the LDCs. The Civil Society Forum will adopt a civil society declaration.

Expected Outcomes

- A civil society declaration at LDC5 outlining priorities that are supportive of the UN and the priorities of the LDCs.
- Stronger support to the LDC agenda among key civil society organizations in international policy discussions beyond fora specific to LDC issues
- Stronger civil society engagement from LDCs in UN processes and in their own countries related to LDC priorities.

Coordination of Civil Society Engagement

LDC Watch, a network of LDC civil society organisations led by civil society actors from the LDCs, will be coordinating civil society engagement in the preparatory process and at LDC5, with support from OHRLLS. This role will include outreach to ensure a broad range of relevant civil society organizations are represented in discussions and meetings, coordinating interventions on behalf of civil society at formal and informal engagements with member states (during preparatory process and the conference), and organizing the Civil Society Forum.

If you have any questions or would like to register your interest in engaging in the LDC Conference and its preparation process, please contact Ms. Erica Carroll-Ogunka of the Office of the High Representative of LDCs LLDCs and SIDS at erica.carroll@un.org, or Mr. Demba Moussa Dembele of LDC Watch at ldc-watch@googlegroups.com.