Digital Impact Alliance Input: Doha Programme of Action

DIAL Recommendations to Consultation of Civil Society with Member States in advance of 2nd PrepCom Meeting for LDC5

The Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) at the United Nations Foundation appreciates the opportunity to submit our comments on the zero draft outcome document for the Consultation of Civil Society with Member States in advance of the 2nd Preparatory Committee Meeting for LDC5.

In line with our Digital Beacons strategy, DIAL encourages Member States and the Preparatory Committee of the LDC5 conference to consider national digital transformation as a holistic part and cross-cutting theme of the agenda, broader than just a priority pathway for its achievement. As outlined in Key Action #2 of the "Doha Programme of Action (POA) for Least Developed Countries," science, technology, and innovation (STI) provide critical means of fighting vulnerabilities in LDC countries in various areas of social and economic development. While the draft POA provides key emphasis on the need for digital capacity building and access, there are other key areas where it could go further in enshrining the relevance of digital technology to LDC5 graduation.

The following provides explicit suggestions on how focus areas 1, 2, 3, and 6 of the POA can place further emphasis on key areas being advocated for by practitioners supporting the integration of technology into global development initiatives and processes.

Focus Area #1 -- Investing in people in LDCs: Eradicating poverty and building capacity to leave no one behind

We are encouraged by the emphasis on the need to invest in digital capacity to promote human capabilities. Still, we suggest the POA go even further by calling for intersectionality, safeguarding, and harm mitigation when building capacity. In addition, we would note that these issues are also of relevance not only for digital capacity-building and connectivity, as enumerated in the POA, but other areas like regulation, digital government, and business. For further examples and specific points, we encourage referring to DIAL's recently released Leadership Brief on Leave No One Behind. This policy brief details the need to not only invest in the capacity of marginalized communities, but also to prioritize their representation, invest in accountability mechanisms, and conduct risk-benefit analyses to ensure the success of these interventions.

Focus Area #2 -- Leveraging the power of science, technology, and innovation to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

DIAL wholly supports paragraph 98, which places specific emphasis on whole-of-government approaches (WGAs), something DIAL advocates for across all of its work. (A positive example in this regard is DIAL's recent work with the ITU, GIZ, and Estonia via the GovStack initiative.) We would further encourage the POA to include specific targets on how to make cross-cutting investments in support of WGAs. We would further encourage the POA to explicitly adopt and embed whole-of-society approaches as a way of designing, planning, and monitoring digital initiatives and

investments. While we welcome the emphasis on multi-stakeholder support, engagement, and partnerships in areas like digital capacity, and infrastructure, emphasis could also be placed on the role of such engagement in all aspects of digital cooperation.

Additionally, we would hope that this focus area could add actions focused on the sustainability of investments in STI -- looking specifically at how it is financed and procured to support national development and resource allocation -- as well as the commitments of global actors to invest in digital public goods and the need to strengthen data governance within LDCs.

Focus Area #3 -- Structural transformation as a driver of prosperity

While DIAL believes in the importance of national digital transformation agendas, the benefits of digital for structural transformation -- specifically in industry and commerce -- show how they should not be siloed from the rest of development planning. By advocating for national digital agendas aligned with LDC5 targets and other national priorities, we believe governments can ensure digital is embedded in all aspects of national development planning. In the long-term, this will help promote the types of economic diversification needed by LDCs as they move towards digital industry, e-services, and e-commerce. We encourage the POA to explicitly position digital as a means to improve social development and productive capacities on the path towards structural transformation through its recommended actions.

Focus Area #6 -- Mobilizing international solidarity, reinvigorated global partnerships and innovative tools for risk-informed sustainable development - a march towards sustainable graduation.

DIAL believes in the need to partner and be collaborative when it comes to supporting digital priorities and investments in Member States -- values enshrined in the Principles for Digital Development. As countries set their own targets and pathways based on the LDC5 recommendations, it is important to emphasize country ownership in targets and actions related to STI. Furthermore, as the POA notes, GDAs must align to national priorities and help governments to find innovative financing mechanisms to support national digital transformation efforts. As a result, DIAL would welcome the POA to go further in explicitly mentioning innovative financing models and procurement of digital as a key part of the LDC5 agenda, either in paragraph 257 or as its own action.

DIAL would like to thank the Preparatory Committee for taking the time to consider our recommendations and look forward to remaining involved in this consultative process.