

ESCWA's Intervention at the PrepCom 5th LDCs Conference

New York, 8 February 2021

Thank you, Mr. Chair for giving me the floor,

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for inviting ESCWA to be part of the preparatory committee meeting ahead of the Fifth international conference on LDCs.

As part of the preparatory process for the 5th LDCs conference, ESCWA has launched a sub-regional process, which includes the preparation of a publication that will focus on the assessment of the IPoA implementation in the 4 Arab LDCs members of ESCWA (Sudan, Mauritania, Somalia, and Yemen). This process includes bilateral meetings with these 4 Arab LDCs as well as a wider sub-regional meeting including regional and international donors, institutions and stakeholders.

The sub-regional meeting, scheduled on 18th February 2021, will serve a number of objectives: (1) the understanding of Arab flows of ODA as well as the lesson learnt in the support provided for the Arab LDCs during the last decade. (2) to engage in a mutual exchange of experiences and best practices in implementing the eight priority areas of the IPoA, in facing structural and emerging challenges, in ensuring early recovery and resilience, (3) to identify wherein positive progress in implementing the IPoA / Agenda 2030, and how progress can be reinforced or relapse to be mitigated and addressed, identify structural gaps to buttress resilience, and to recommend supportive actionable policies; and (4) to facilitate networking and closer and more coordinated interaction on the level of regional and international stakeholders and donors,. (5) This meeting will afford the LDC member states and donor community with a chance to assess and elaborate on how the international donor community, relevant stakeholders, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations have been supporting and ways to adapt ODA and their assistance programs, and can focus support for resilience-building for Arab LDCs over the next decade.

This sub-regional meeting will also provide assistance-provider countries in direct consultation with the beneficiary Arab LDCs, with an opportunity to share their views and perspectives on the preparation of the next 2020-2030 decade and the content of an in-depth analytical publication based on the submitted National Reports.

As for the ESCWA report on Arab LDCs, it focuses on an analysis and assessment of the implementation of the eight priority areas (based on the submitted National Reports) , identifying the structural challenges and emerging issues over the period 2010-2020 in the IPoA implementation phase and how to build better over the next decade (2020-2030), and make it coincide with the year of implementation of the SDGs. It addresses resilience-building strategies for Arab LDCs with the view of strengthening their existing capacities and reduce their vulnerability to crises, shocks and disasters over the next Doha decade.

To this end, ESCWA has initiated bilateral discussions with the four Arab LDCs (Sudan, Mauritania, Yemen and Somalia) on the two thrust areas of the study. It held the first meeting with Yemen at the ministerial level, including the Yemen UNRC, the regional Arab donors and funds, the Islamic Bank Group and the World Bank. A delegation of four ministers from Yemen attended the meeting, led by the Minister of Planning. The discussions focused on the Yemen relevant content of the ESCWA report to received comments and input from the Government of Yemen; as well as the priorities for Yemen post0conflict

recovery and the humanitarian-development nexus to help Yemen set on the path of sustainable development in the medium and long-term. The discussions also focused with the government of Yemen on the achievement in implementing the IPoA, and the developmental challenges during the last decade, and to agree on a set of priorities as defined by Yemen to focus on in the coming decade.

Main recommendations of the meeting:

- Necessity to end the conflict for the humanitarian-development nexus to be implementable.
- Strengthen efforts to reinforce pre-war welfare institutions, including by 'shadow aligning' humanitarian cash programs to the SWF/SFD/PWP, while improving the latter in terms of coverage and delivery capacity'
- In countries such as Yemen, where functioning welfare institutions existed until quite recently, significant efforts can be made to preserve and strengthen such institutions, for instance through techniques such as **shadow alignment**.
- In the context of a devastating war and an unprecedented economic and humanitarian emergency, the international community should make it a priority to try to preserve the capacity of Yemen's public welfare institutions to deliver essential services.
- Rather than set up an entirely parallel delivery structure, the international community needs to opt to "**shadow align**" their support to this preexisting social-policy landscape.
- Local ownership is a must

The outcomes of this meeting will feed into a sub-regional meeting that will be held on 18th February 2021, within the preparatory process towards the Fifth LDCs Conference, Doha 2022, It will constitute an opportunity for all stakeholders to share views and discuss with official representatives of Arab LDCs and donor agencies the way forward for 2020-2030.