

**Preparatory Committee
for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
Organisational session
New York, 8 February 2021**

Statement of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), it is my great pleasure to deliver this statement at the Preparatory Committee Meeting for the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs. We would like to express our appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. Utoikamanu in her role as the Secretary-General of the Conference. OHRLLS is our close partner and we look forward to supporting this important Conference.

In the coming 12 months, this PrepCom will set the ambitious programme of action for LDCs to overcome structural challenges, eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development and climate goals and enable graduation. Energy is a key enabler of this agenda. It is the new, modern energy system, with renewables at its heart, that will be a vehicle to power economies, create jobs and new industries, and support resilient and inclusive societies.

However, the LDCs are yet to fully benefit from this global trend. Only 52% of the overall LDC population had access to electricity in 2018. This is not acceptable at the time when technology solutions exist and can be deployed at pace and scale with indigenous resources. IRENA tracks and analyses policies and regulations needed to mobilise investments in off-grid and utility-scale renewable energy investments and their verticals including in LDCs. We observe that there is still a critical funding-gap in order to scale up investments in the renewable energy sector in these most in-need-regions and countries. In the LDCs, public funding is strategic to mobilise private investments and financing in renewables.

IRENA supports LDCs by providing advice and capacity building on stimulating short-term and long-term recovery efforts through energy transition. The Agency advises over 60 countries including 17 LDCs on the enhancement and the implementation of renewable energy ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

As a short-term action, the Agency is pursuing projects in different countries, including LDCs on nexus between energy and other social sectors like healthcare and food security. IRENA's project in Burkina Faso on electrifying primary healthcare facilities is a part of its effort to support the over-burdened health sector. IRENA's viability assessment on renewables for agri-food sectors covers LDCs like Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and Myanmar. IRENA has conducted Renewables Readiness Assessment 11 LDCs with a set of recommendations for actions to utilize renewable energy to bring about energy transition.

We are very pleased to be working with OHRLLS on a joint report on *Scaling Up Renewable Energy in LDCs*, which I hope will be of high relevance for the Conference.

IRENA's vast repository of analysis, data, and products will feed into this report to ensure its utility and real-life application.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that IRENA, with its global Membership, forward looking mandate and extensive knowledge remains deeply committed to the LDC agenda. We look forward to working with you all in preparation for the Conference and importantly, on the implementation of the new 10-year programme of action.

Thank you.