

# THE 5th UN CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

23-27 January 2022  
Doha, Qatar

New York, UNHQ, October 2020

As the end of the decade of the [Istanbul Programme of Action](#) (IPOA) for the Least Developed Countries draws closer, the General Assembly has agreed to convene the Fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs - LDC5 - in Doha, Qatar, in January 2022, at Heads of State and Government level. See GA resolution [74/232B](#).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also previous GA resolutions [73/242](#) and [74/232](#), and ECOSOC resolutions [2019/3](#) and [2020/L.21](#).

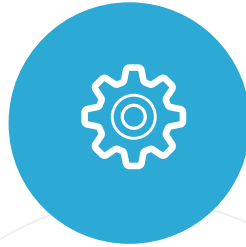
# LDC5 CONFERENCE MANDATE

At the Conference, leaders from all UN Member States will gather to:



## Undertake

a comprehensive appraisal of the IPOA implementation by the LDCs and their development partners;



## Mobilize

additional international support measures and action in favour of the LDCs and,



## Agree

on a renewed partnership between the LDCs and their development partners, including the private sector, civil society and governments at all levels.



The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States ([OHRLLS](#)) is the UN's focal point for LDC5 Conference preparations and [High Representative Fekita Katoa 'Utoikamanu](#) will be the Secretary-General of the Conference. OHRLLS will be working closely with the Host Country, Qatar, which is strongly committed to making LDC5 a success.



## LDC5 PREPARATORY PROCESS

The preparatory process for LDC5 will be based on country-level, regional and global substantive reviews of all [IPoA priorities](#), involving all major IPoA stakeholders. The outcomes of these inclusive and broad-based reviews will feed 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 PrepCom will elect two co-Chairs and a Bureau.

It will meet twice, according to the following revised schedule:

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



# LDC5 CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS

## in the COVID-19 Era

The fifth UN programme for the LDCs will be adopted at an exceptionally critical time. The ambition behind the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is severely jeopardised by COVID-19. From immeasurable human suffering to an unprecedented global social and economic crisis, the pandemic is derailing years of hard-won development gains and causing progress on poverty, hunger and unemployment to slide backwards. Inequalities have deepened and widened, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable groups and countries.



Photo: Rwanda's students listen to radio lessons at home while their schools are closed due to COVID-19. OCHA



No country was ready to face the novel coronavirus,

an invisible enemy that wreaked havoc on even the most advanced public health systems and economies.



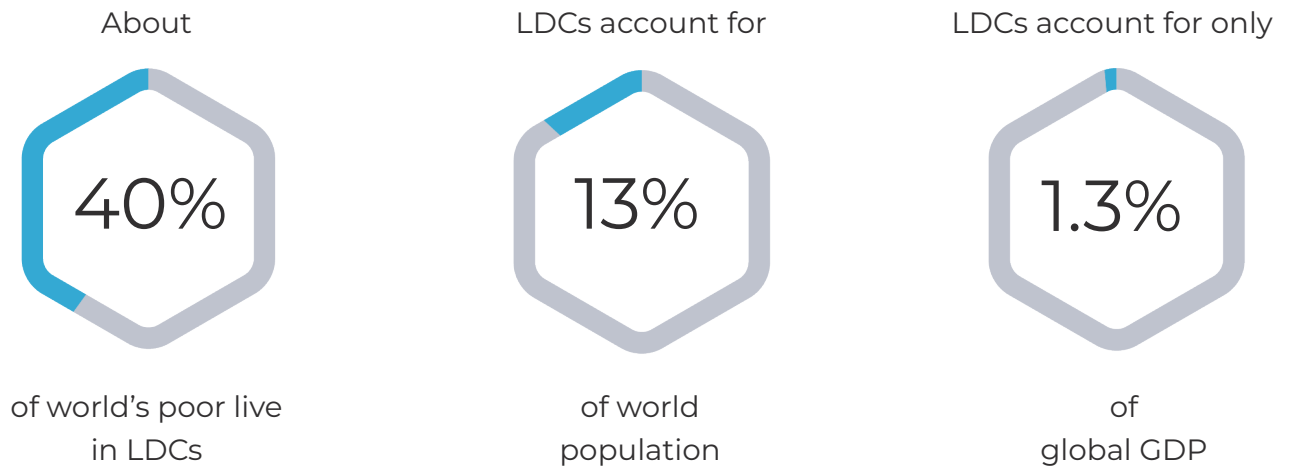
The virus quickly spread like wildfire across the world.

LDCs in sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean and Asia-Pacific have seen the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths grow exponentially. This grim picture is likely even bleaker, given the largely insufficient testing capacity that may lead to underestimating the level of true infections in many LDCs.

**The reality of the 47 LDCs is that, when they were struck by the virus, they were already lagging far behind on all SDGs.**

# A NEW URGENCY FOR ACTION

About 40% of world's poor live in LDCs. On average, two thirds of the urban population live in slums. Many are suffering conflict or emerging from one. LDCs account for 13% of world population but only about 1.3% of global GDP and less than 1% of global trade and FDI. Still barely a fifth of the population in LDCs has access to the internet, though that number is rising.



Suffering from multiple long-standing structural vulnerabilities, including weak public health services and minimal resources to prevent or mitigate the spread of any virus, LDCs instituted lockdowns and difficult-to- implement social distancing measures.

Vulnerable groups in the informal sector are facing the difficult choice between health and subsistence. Their fragile education systems are struggling to find ways to resume school amid the

global pandemic since remote learning is, by and large, simply not a feasible option. Furthermore, LDC economies were completely unprepared to withstand the collapse of global demand for the products and services on whose export they rely.

The pandemic is a devastating blow to livelihoods throughout all LDC regions. It is now threatening to roll back progress made by a growing number of LDCs on the path to graduation out of the category.

**It is against this backdrop that the preparatory process for the LDC5 Conference, which had been in full swing since 2019, was brought – like many other intergovernmental processes - to a sudden pause in early March 2020.**

# ROAD TO LDC5 AND NEW PROGRAMME OF ACTION

OHRLLS, in close coordination with the LDC Group, had to postpone the planned African and Asia-Pacific regional review meetings. This led to the need to also reschedule the PrepCom sessions and the Conference itself. (Refer to GA resolution 74/232B as mentioned above.)



As the international community came together to pay tribute to the **75th anniversary of the UN** and showing much needed solidarity in times of crisis, the LDC Group has called for a **stimulus package** to support their countries recover and build back better from the pandemic. Such call was reiterated by LDC Ministers in their **2020 LDC ministerial declaration**.



**It is now time for the LDC5 preparatory process to gather pace again.**



The new programme of action for the LDCs needs to be based on a solid foundation of national ownership and leadership driven by a reinvigorated global partnership for their increased resilience and sustainable development. Conference preparations have been designed by OHRLLS to sequence analytical inputs and policy recommendations towards building that strengthened global partnership.



The **2020 SG Report** on IPOA implementation, prepared by OHRLLS, calls for heightened attention to:

- LDCs' increasing indebtedness
- exacerbation of urban and socioeconomic problems
- need for strong policies for youth, education and food security
- heavy toll from climate change related disasters

COVID-19 and its impact sound a clarion call for the need to promote digital access and broadband connectivity in LDCs as one of the effective ways to build a resilient society in the face of new and emerging challenges.



**National reviews** of the implementation of the IPOA were undertaken by the LDCs during 2019 and 2020.

The network of **LDC National Focal Points** played a key role in the preparation of the national reports. 26 LDCs have so far submitted their final national review report to OHRLLS. More are expected. The Office is finalizing an analytical review and assessment.



The **two regional review meetings** are being rescheduled to take place in the Spring of 2021.

These will be organized in close collaboration with the two host countries, **Malawi** and **Bangladesh**, as well as the **UN Economic Commission for Africa** and the **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific** and will involve all LDCs and their development partners. Dates and formats of the regional reviews are still to be confirmed, given the continuing uncertainties related to the pandemic.



At the **global level**, in addition to the intergovernmental process described above,

OHRLLS will organise consultative meetings for the Ambassadors of **LDCs and Friends of LDCs** in New York to find consensus on new priorities.



The President of the General Assembly and the President of ECOSOC are planning a special event in **June 2021**.

Photo: The front lines of fighting COVID-19 in Madagascar. World Bank / Henitsoa Rafalia



## INCLUSIVE AND BROAD-BASED

OHRLLS will continue to coordinate the interagency consultative group on IPOA and its contributions to LDC5. UN Agencies, as well as the World Bank and IMF, the WTO and other relevant international and regional organizations, have been invited to collaborate on the organization of **pre-conference events** and undertake **thematic appraisals** in order to outline strategies to make further progress in specific sectoral areas of importance for LDC sustainable development.



The first such event was the 8th LDC Ministerial Conference, co-organized by UNIDO and UN-OHRLLS on 2 November 2019 in Abu Dhabi. The conference adopted a [ministerial declaration on accelerating industrialization in LDCs](#).



As a contribution to the LDC5 preparations, the recent [Report of the SG and High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) contains an analysis of the implementation of the right to development in LDCs, taking into account existing challenges, including in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and recommendations on how to overcome them.



Furthermore, OHRLLS is taking steps to ensure the full involvement of **UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams** in all 47 LDCs.



An **Academic Conference**, jointly organized by UNU- WIDER, SDSN, OHRLLS and the Government of Finland, will take place in **Helsinki, Finland in August 2021** with the objective to provide an analytical underpinning to the discussions leading up to the LDC5 PrepComs, and leading to more informed debates and intergovernmental negotiations of the new programme of action for the LDCs.



Preparations at the national, regional and global levels, pre-conference events as well as contributions from the **private sector, academia, civil society and parliamentarians** will provide evidence-based inputs for the new programme of action to be negotiated and adopted at LDC5 in Doha in January 2022.

*OHRLLS and the LDC Group are very grateful for Qatar, Turkey and Finland's generous support to LDC5 preparations and welcome everyone to contribute to the success of the conference.*



**LDC5 CONFERENCE WEBSITE:**  
[WWW.UN.ORG/LDC5](http://WWW.UN.ORG/LDC5)

### For any further information on LDC5 preparations:

Please contact the LDC Team @UNOHRLLS:

**Ms. Margherita Musollino**

Economic Affairs Officer, LDC Unit Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS



E-mail: [musollino@un.org](mailto:musollino@un.org)

Web: [www.un.org/ohrls](http://www.un.org/ohrls)