

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared under the overall guidance of Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS). The report benefitted from the general supervision of Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director of the Office of the High Representative and Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy Coordination, Monitoring and Reporting Service, OHRLLS. Team members comprised Susanna Wolf (team leader), Md. Abdul Alim, Yuxin Ai, Erica Carroll-Ogunka, Miniva Chibuye, Yeshey Dorji, Aniket Ghai, Tomás Gonzalez, Anne Kersting, Margherita Musollino, and Shifaana Thowfeequ. Vinaye Ancharaz, University of Mauritius and Middlesex University (Mauritius), provided a background paper for section D. Maria Martinho of UN DESA provided inputs to Box I and Elizabeth Njoki Wanjiru and Binu Parthan of IRENA provided inputs to Box II. Oumar Diallo of OHRLLS provided inputs and comments on the draft report.

Support for processing of the report and its media outreach was received from Conor Paul O'Loughlin and Hans Damien Sass. Oksana Yarashuk provided general assistance and Pelin Gemici, Shayan Mazaheri, Marion Pacini, Jade Cyrielle Sainte-Rose and Deer Sherifu provided research assistance. Shayan Mazaheri provided assistance for the translation of the Executive Summary from English to French.

Note

The designations and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

FOREWORD

I am pleased to share with you the 2021 mandated report on the State of the LDCs. It focuses on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought the structural handicaps of LDCs into the limelight as it affected them through multiple channels and exacerbated their vulnerabilities.

Thus, COVID-19 has put the development progress achieved over the past 10 years—the period of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action—into jeopardy, just at the time when we are preparing for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs (LDC5), which will take place in Doha in January 2022.

This Conference is expected to provide a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action; address new and emerging challenges and opportunities; reinvigorate the global commitment to addressing the special needs of LDCs; and mobilize additional international support and formulate and adopt a renewed partnership for LDCs.

The 2021 report on the State of the LDCs prepared by my office is a call to action. The report analyses the effects of COVID-19 in all spheres of life in LDCs, from health and education to remittances and employment. It also looks at macroeconomic and financial effects.

It sheds light on the actions people and governments in LDCs took to combat the pandemic—from SMEs producing hand sanitizer and universities developing COVID-19 tests to governments expanding support to SMEs and building on the experience from previous epidemics to contain the spread of the virus.

The report presents recommendations on how to build back better and enhance resilience to future shocks. As LDCs are often affected by multiple shocks at the same time, not least by shocks related to climate change, measures in a new programme of action need to be bold and targeted.

It is my sincere hope that this report will contribute to further dialogue and enhanced action in support of the LDCs and an ambitious outcome of the LDC5 Conference, building on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu

Under-Secretary-General, and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked
Developing Countries and Small Island Developing
States

Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu