



Enhancing Capacity of Landlocked Developing Countries to Address Climate Change, energy and water-related challenges during COVID-19 era: Experiences and Solutions

Side Event at Water Pavilion at COP26 Hall 4

Wednesday 3 November 2021 (12:00 to 13:00hrs UK time)

Introduction

The 32 landlocked developing countries with a population of over 530 million share some common problems due to their geographical location which affect their economic engagement with the rest of the world. The structural vulnerabilities and limited productive capacities of LLDCs expose them disproportionately to the severe negative impacts of climate change. The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities of LLDCs to climate change, especially drought, desertification, land degradation and melting of glaciers and has highlighted the necessity to enhance their capacity to address climate change, energy and water-related challenges.

Most LLDCs are dependent on a few primary agricultural and/or mineral commodities and almost two thirds of the population is still dependent on agriculture. While this is the case, many LLDCs are located in dryland regions where the impacts of climate change, desertification and land degradation are more pronounced. In total, 54 per cent of total land in LLDCs is classified as dryland, and about 60 per cent of the population in LLDCs is located in dryland areas, hence their vulnerability to global warming, desertification, and land degradation.

Recurrent droughts in the Sahel region, Southern Africa and other regions with LLDCs affects food and water security. Botswana has witnessed the drying of major dams particularly in the southern part of the country that used to supply safe drinking water. The bulk of lake Chad has shrunk in the last fifty years due to high temperatures and droughts, putting those dependent on the water source, at risk of losing their primary water supply. The contraction of the Aral Sea over the years concerns all countries of the drainage basin mostly LLDCs in Central Asia. Lack of

abundant surface water in the LLDCs heightens their vulnerability to climate change and water scarcity.

Various heatwaves affected LLDCs over the past years, increasing the risk of violent wildfires. Land covered by forests has declined steadily from 17.0% in 2015 to 16.6% in 2020 in LLDCs. In 2019, extreme temperatures were recorded in Southern Africa (up to 45°C in parts of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana). Extreme heat waves also affected Latin American LLDCs in 2020 (various cities in Paraguay and Bolivia had their hottest day on record on 5 October 2020).

While the frequency of droughts has been increasing on one hand, climate change has also been resulting in more frequent extreme climate events such as heavy rains, storms, and cyclones leading to high human and infrastructure loss and destruction. For instance, tropical cyclone Idai in 2019 caused over 1,200 deaths in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. In 2020, 6 African LLDCs reported loss of life or significant displacement of populations due to flooding. Total economic damages from cyclone Idai across Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and Malawi sum up to over US \$2.2 billion, with irreversible damages to the agricultural sector. Similarly, 2020 East Africa floods destroyed crops and swept away animals, causing food prices to go up in numerous LLDCs such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda (maize prices were up from 14% to 41% in November while bean prices rose from 9% to 25%).

In addition, many of the LLDCs are mountainous countries. For these countries, climate change equates to melting of glaciers, which have important effects on water resources, frequent landslides, reduced biodiversity, among other things. The sum of the above is that livelihoods are affected and people are forced to move.

Climate change related natural disasters in LLDCs weaken infrastructure (including roads, rail, hydropower plants, schools, homes and public buildings), imposing a direct cost on transit trade, which consequently puts constraints on the LLDC's capacity to compete on the global market. At the beginning of 2021, some LLDCs including Paraguay, Botswana, Malawi, and Zimbabwe experienced extreme rainstorms that destroyed bridges and road infrastructure.

These impacts of climate change pose a great challenge for LLDCs that are already faced with many developmental challenges and do not have adequate safety nets. These impacts will also have a major influence on the ability of the LLDCs to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and therefore need to be given special attention not only by the LLDCs but by the international community. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased LLDCs' vulnerability to impact of disasters and reduced their climate change adaptation capacity.

It is important for LLDCs to invest in nature-based solutions and sustainable water conservation; in land restoration and in sustainable smart agriculture; in climate-resilient infrastructure; and sustainable energy solutions. In 2020, 30 LLDCs had undertaken at least one measure to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) following the UNFCCC NAP Technical Guidelines. As of June 2021, only three LLDCs had prepared NAPs and only one had submitted its second nationally determined contribution to the UNFCCC. LLDCs need to identify and prepare bankable projects to secure financial resources for their climate change adaptation to enhance water security.

LLDCs have limited potential to adapt and mitigate to the impacts of climate change. They lack both the financial and technical capacities. Reversing alongside mitigating the effects of climate change are crucial to reducing poverty and improving environmental sustainability. Enhanced international support is needed to build and strengthen LLDCs' national adaptation capacities, to prepare bankable projects to access climate funds. It is important to share approaches and solutions that are being successfully applied to address climate change and water issues to support the LLDCs so that they can make progress towards meeting the SDGs.

Objective - The side event will discuss specific impact of climate change on LLDCs, with a focus on water security, food security and energy connectivity and indicate how COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation. It will identify priority needs, and areas of capacity support that should be addressed in the future to ensure LLDCs can make steady and significant progress in addressing the adverse effects of climate change amidst other challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will highlight approaches and emerging best practice solutions that can be shared.

The issues discussed in the event will feed into the implementation of the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and implementation of the Water Action Decade (2018-2028).

Expected Outcomes

This High-level Event is expected to increase awareness on the challenges faced by LLDCs from climate change; successful solutions and approaches that can be adopted, adapted or scaled up in LLDCs; and capacity building areas on how the LLDCs can be supported to deal with the impact of climate change and challenges.

Participants

All participants welcome from government, civil society and general public from LLDCs and other Member States, officials of the United Nations, UN agencies, development partners, multi-lateral institutions, civil society, private sector, academia, and NGOs.

Format

The meeting will be held over 1 hour and will include high level Ministers from LLDCs, who will present key issues and experiences. The presentations will focus on practical solutions and initiatives that can be scaled up to address climate change.

Language

The event will be held in English.