

**United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States
Report of the Secretary-General**

**Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing
Countries for the Decade 2014 - 2024**

Introduction

The report is being prepared in response to the request by the General Assembly, in its resolution 76/217 to the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-seventh session a report on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. The report will provide comprehensive information, analysis and statistical data on recent progress and challenges in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and of the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review. The report will also review the performance of the LLDCs on the Sustainable Development Goals and recent socio-economic development and the progress made in implementing the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. Furthermore, it will highlight COVID-19 recovery efforts in LLDCs and identify areas that require further action and support. The report will provide important input to the intergovernmental processes including of the Second Committee of the General Assembly.

The report will be prepared based on information provided by entities in the United Nations system and other international organisations. The report will also be based on recent studies and analysis of current data and proceedings of recent meetings. The report will also provide a comprehensive statistical annex.

The Draft Outline of the report

I. Introduction

This section will briefly introduce the report, highlighting the legislative mandate for the report and its scope.

FAO's work is guided by its Strategic Framework (2022-2031), which seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

The four *betters* represent an organising principle for how FAO intends to contribute directly to SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) as well as to supporting achievement of the broader SDG agenda, which is crucial for attaining FAO's overall vision. The *betters* reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems. As such, they also encourage a strategic and systems-oriented approach within all of FAO's interventions.

With a view to achieve the 2030 Agenda, all actors at all levels must be engaged. Today's challenges require multi-shareholder partnerships, including with the private sector, to ensure effective implementation of global agendas.

II. An overview of recent socio-economic development in LLDCs including impact of COVID-19 pandemic

The section will analyse recent developments in the social and economic situation of the LLDCs including progress made by LLDCs on the SDGs and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on these countries. The analysis will integrate gender and human rights.

III. Status of implementation of the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action

The section will assess the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA highlighting the major progress and challenges experienced including due to COVID-19. It will be prepared using inputs submitted by Member States, UN system organizations and other relevant international organizations and analysis of available relevant statistical data for each priority area. The specific sub sections will be namely-

- *Fundamental Transit Policy issues.*
 - *Infrastructure Development and Maintenance*
 - *International Trade and Trade Facilitation*
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- ✓ FAO assists countries in strengthening their capacities related to international trade agreements and the promotion of export opportunities. Main activities include: i) development of evidence-based analyses; ii) knowledge sharing and iii) national capacity development on key issues related to food and agricultural trade, including regional and multilateral trade negotiations.
 - ✓ FAO also hosts the secretariats of two of the three international standard setting bodies explicitly mentioned in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). These are the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).
 - ✓ FAO also supports Members in strengthening national systems and developing capacities for effective measures to protect their human, animal and plant life or health, and facilitate trade. For example, FAO has been working with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA) Secretariat and directly with many of its member states on the assessment and management of various plant/animal health and food safety risks. FAO's engagement in the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme has benefited 11 African LLDCs.
 - ✓ In the Asia and the Pacific region, FAO supported **Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic** to identify priority interventions required to lower trade barriers within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and their trade partners. Similar support was provided to **Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal**, which are part of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
 - ✓ With reference to capacity development, FAO has also facilitated two e-learning courses for the benefit of trade and related policy practitioners in different regional contexts. More specifically, a course on "Agrifood Export Promotion Policy and Practical Tools" was organized for Central Asia and Eastern European countries (**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan**), and another one on "Agriculture in International Trade Agreements" for Latin America and the Caribbean (**Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay**).
 - ✓ FAO also develops indicators and analyses at country level to measure agricultural and trade policies and assess their implications for producers and consumers. For example, price incentives indicators have been developed for six LLDCs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and**

Uzbekistan). More specifically, FAO also supported **Kyrgyzstan** in developing measures to improve access to new markets, diversify agrifood exports and comply with WTO commitments, including capacity development for preparing WTO notifications of domestic support to agriculture.

- *Regional Integration and cooperation*
- *Structural economic transformation*
- ✓ FAO has been assisting LLDCs (**Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Uganda, and Uzbekistan**) in the areas of research, extension and agricultural innovation systems. Technical support was provided through global projects and programmes, including the Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) and Tropical Agriculture Platform – Agricultural Innovation Systems (TAP-AIS) projects as well as regional and country projects and regular programme activities. More specifically, comprehensive country assessment reports with recommendations on different aspects of countries’ agricultural innovation systems (AIS), extension and advisory systems (EAS), research, extension and farmers linkages as well as agricultural research for development have been conducted in all countries. More specifically, EAS infrastructure has been strengthened in **Azerbaijan** to respond to COVID-19 and extension agents and farmers have been trained to perform their duties safely in the field (GCP/AZE/018/EC). Moreover, multi-stakeholder coordination committees have been set up and facilitated by the projects to cope with the COVID-19 situation.
- ✓ Policies and strategic implementation plans have been developed or strengthened in **Azerbaijan, Eswatini, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**.
- ✓ Local innovation processes, including multi-stakeholder innovation platforms as well as institutions and structures have been strengthened in **Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malawi**, among other countries.
- ✓ A hybrid model of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Farm Business School (FBS) has been promoted in **Azerbaijan and Malawi** to better link production and marketing. In addition, a series of Integrated Pest Management Farmer Field Schools (IPM-FFSs) on Fall Armyworm control have been implemented in **Malawi** and in 11 countries and capacities to innovate have been strengthened in all target countries.
- ✓ Relevant FAO publications include:
 - “Reforming and Strengthening Public Agricultural Extension and Advisory Service Systems in Smallholder Farming” policy brief.
 - “Empowering smallholder farmers to access digital AEAS” policy brief.
 - Guide for training of facilitators of Multi-actor Agricultural Innovation Platform
 - Guidelines for Master Trainers of Multi-actors Agricultural Innovation Platform training of facilitators (MAIP TOF) – (to be published shortly).
- ✓ With specific reference to public-private dialogue and private sector development, FAO provides assistance to LLDCs in the following areas: i) Elaboration of food systems’ related development plans in collaboration with the private sector for maximum sustainability impact (main focus includes prioritized territories, market systems and/or value chains); ii) Establishment of system-based programmes

focusing on policy alignment and coordinated public private sector investment, such as Agrinvest and 3ADI+.

- ✓ FAO is providing assistance to LLDCs under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HiH), an evidence-based, country-led and country owned initiative, aimed at prioritizing interventions in vulnerable countries that need support in achieving SDGs 1 and 2. In **Bhutan, Lao PDR and Nepal**, FAO is identifying the most vulnerable sub-national areas with high potential for investment through the HiH geospatial platform. By generating remote sensing based spatial indicators of biophysical and climatic parameters, and developing semantic geodatabase through Geographic Information System (GIS), FAO is also specifically supporting **Bhutan** to map farming systems and identify potential areas suitable for integrating neglected and underutilized species that are nutrient-dense, climate-resilient, locally available or adaptable and economically viable for sustainable agrifood system transformation.
- ✓ Within the Mountain Agriculture Initiative, FAO provides additional support to **Bhutan, Lao PDR and Nepal** identifying and promoting mountain specialty products production (e.g. Future Smart Food), processing, marketing and consumption. By doing so, it effectively facilitates LLDCs turning multi-dimensional challenges into opportunities to contribute to sustainable mountain agriculture development for Zero Hunger and poverty reduction in Asia. ¹
- ✓ Additional support to the three Asian LLDCs was provided under the Regional Initiative on Zero Hunger to launch the Zero Hunger Challenge and address the dual challenges of zero hunger and climate change. More specifically, FAO supported **Bhutan, Lao PDR and Nepal** to harness the potential of neglected and underutilized species. For instance, **Lao PDR** applied a four-dimensional criteria and prioritized neglected and underutilized species that are nutrient-dense, climate-resilient locally available or adaptable and economically viable as Future Smart Food. **Lao PDR** has integrated agricultural diversification in its National Agricultural Development Strategy, which guided the shift from rice-based farming systems to more diversified and sustainable food systems.² Additional examples include enhancing access to adequate, affordable, nutritious and healthy food for all in Afghanistan and Mongolia (2020-2024).
- ✓ FAO is also identifying best practices and innovative solutions to support value chain development of priority products. More specifically, under the One Country, One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative, FAO established effective partnerships with CGIARs - formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research - and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to support **Bhutan** on quinoa product value chain development. FAO is identifying technical packages and best practices on innovative approaches (e.g. innovative technology, financing, agribusiness, promotion tools and instruments) to promote special agro product production, processing and marketing and consumption.
- ✓ The 31st FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held in November 2020, set out a series of recommendations for FAO to support of landlocked developing countries.

¹ FAO. 2019. Mountain agriculture: Opportunities for harnessing Zero Hunger in Asia. Bangkok

² FAO.2018. Rediscovering hidden treasures of neglected and underutilized species for Zero Hunger in Asia.

These include: i) support and strengthen the collaboration among landlocked African countries and their respective transit neighbours, including on the formulation of policy priorities and investments for enhanced food security and trade; ii) strengthen coherence in supporting landlocked countries in Africa, considering their vulnerability to address unique and complex food security and nutrition challenges; iii) support LLDCs to create mechanisms to harness public and private investment in agriculture, food security and nutrition to capitalize on the existing potentials; and iv) assist LLDCs to proactively and meaningfully address their food security and nutrition challenges through regional and continental initiatives. Some examples of support include the African Continental Free Trade Area, Programme on Infrastructure Development in Africa, and Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Vision 25X25.

Pursuant to these recommendations, FAO has approved special funding for a proposal which will address collaboration among LLDCs and examine some policy matters. Examples of collaboration targeting such countries include two transboundary projects, namely: i) **Mali and Mauritania** (UNJP/MLI/064/PBF: Conflict management and strengthening agro-pastoral resilience at the Mauritania Malian border³ /*Gestion des conflits et renforcement de la résilience agro pastorale à la frontière Mauritanie Malienne*); and ii) **Mali and Burkina Faso** (UNJP/MLI/055/PBF: Promotion of peaceful transhumance in the Liptako Gourma region/ *Promotion d'une transhumance pacifique dans la région du Liptako Gourma*). In addition, Malawi is participating in a southern Africa sub-regional project entitled "Support Towards the Operationalization of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Agricultural Policy (GCP/SFS/004/EC)".

- ✓ Programme planning for LLDCs in Africa includes the following areas: i) strengthening the resilience and social protection of populations vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity; ii) promoting diversification of production and development of agro-sylvo-pastoral and fishery value chains and; iii) supporting the formulation and implementation of national policies.

For example, **Zambia's** Rapid Food Systems Assessment project is undergoing a planning process for collection of data through the joint effort of the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Centre of Initiative and Development (CFID), the European Delegation in **Zambia**, and two FAOnational consultants. Another relevant example includes the ongoing national and subnational food systems dialogue in Malawi, implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

- ✓ Lastly, the various FAO led or supported initiatives, including the Hand-in-Hand initiative, the Great Green Wall initiative and the G5 Sahel Resilience programme are contributing to address food security and nutrition in several African LLDCs. Some examples of success include the implementation of the "Strengthening Coordination, Scaling Up and Governance of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa (SSUGCASA) project.

- *Means of implementation*

IV. Follow-up and review and progress on Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years

The section will highlight progress in other activities of the United Nations system and other international organizations relating to implementation of the priorities of the VPoA including the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

This section will provide key recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action based on the analysis provided in the report.

Statistical Annex

The statistical annex will provide, in a tabular form, referenced, national-level data on selected VPoA indicators discussed in the report.

Information is available from the “Selected Indicators” section of FAOSTAT <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/>.