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1 April 2022

Dear Ms. Schroderus-Fox,

I wish to express my appreciation for your letter dated 7 February 2022 inviting the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to provide inputs to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for consideration by the General Assembly at its 77th session. In this regard, I have the pleasure of enclosing the Agency's inputs which include activities relevant to LLDCs implemented since the last reporting period.

As the global intergovernmental organisation leading the energy transformation, IRENA fully supports the implementation of the VPoA for LLDCs. We are working closely with our Members, including most LLDCs, to accelerate renewables deployment worldwide in the context of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our partnership with UN-OHRLLS is important in this endeavor, and we look forward to further collaborating on joint initiatives and activities under our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Please accept, dear Ms. Schroderus-Fox, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Wilfried Biya
Permanent Observer
to the United Nations

Enclosure: 1

Ms Heidi Schroderus-Fox

Acting High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
New York, United States

**Report on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA)
by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
March 2022**

Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy as catalyst and key enabler for the development of societies is rightly highlighted in the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA). It falls under priority area 2b: *Infrastructure development and maintenance: Energy and information and communications technology infrastructure*. VPoA's objectives for energy is to expand and upgrade, as appropriate, infrastructure for supply, transmission and distribution of modern and renewable energy services in rural and urban areas.

To facilitate implementation, the VPoA encourages development partners to take actions in the field of energy: to support efforts by LLDCs to develop their energy and information and communications technology sectors; and to promote energy-efficient investment in LLDCs and facilitate the green economic transformation.

Progress towards achieving SDG7 in LLDCs

While notable progress has been made towards access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in recent years – with the total global number of people without access to electricity falling below 1 billion and now amounting 759 million – a significant number of people in LLDCs still live without reliable energy and remain left behind.¹ The average levels of access to electricity in LLDCs grew from 45 per cent in 2010 to 58 per cent in 2019. This rate of electricity access is significantly low compared to the global average of 83 per cent and 90 per cent in 2010 and 2019 respectively.

13 LLDCs were able to close their electricity access gap or nearly able to close it. At the same time, 14 LLDCs still have access rates below 50%, all of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Challenges in electrifying the last mile, such as the lack of project finance, infrastructure investments and sustainable business models as well as operational inefficiencies, often mean that many low-revenue and decentralised rural customers and businesses are bypassed in electrification projects. At the same time, they frequently represent a strong support for economies, particularly in agriculture and agro-processing.

Technology innovation and advancement in business models, combined with falling costs, have supported the global uptake of renewables, offering affordable energy access to even the most remote rural communities. The amount of the renewable energy capacity in the total final energy consumption (TFEC) in LLDCs reached 44 per cent in 2020, a rise from 37 per cent in 2000. The high share of renewables is mostly due to hydropower installed in the countries with a large potential for this technology (e.g. Ethiopia, Zambia, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan).

IRENA support to LLDCs

To strengthen cooperation aimed at promoting renewable energy deployment in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, IRENA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN-OHRLLS in September 2019. The two organisations collaborate on activities to support LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to accelerate the energy transition, close the energy access gaps and tackle the socio-economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy.

¹ IEA, IRENA, UNSD, World Bank, WHO. 2021. *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report*. World Bank, Washington DC. Note that the 2022 version of the Report will be released in late May/early June. Hence, the new numbers should be considered for the SG report.

The Agency has implemented the following activities since the last reporting period on the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA, namely since early 2021:

- The joint UNOHRRLLS - IRENA report on scaling up renewable energy in LLDCs is in the final stages of publication and is expected to be launched in Q2/Q3 2022. IRENA and OHRRLLS experts have developed the report, which is expected to provide an overview of deployment trends and outline possible actions to scale-up renewable energy to bridge the energy access gap in LLDCs and assist these countries in harnessing the vast socio-economic benefits of renewables.
- IRENA continued its support in LLDCs to assess conditions needed to accelerate renewable energy deployment through the Renewable Readiness Assessment (RRA) tool. With this regard, and in coordination with respective governments, RRA implementation is ongoing for Burkina Faso, and Kyrgyzstan.
- The Agency continues to support member countries, including LLDCs, to enhance renewable energy ambitions in the National Determined Contributions (NDCs). Significant progress has been made, and substantive inputs are provided to: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Eswatini, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Mali, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Rwanda, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- IRENA is also providing support on the Long-Term low-emission and greenhouse gas development Strategies (LTS) to Mongolia and will provide a long-term view to ensure alignment with the net-zero target of the Paris Agreement.
- IRENA is providing technical support to promote decentralised renewable energy solutions to address multiple SDG targets. In connection to the energy- health nexus, the Agency, in partnership with the government of Burkina Faso and Mali, is conducting an assessment for the electrification of rural health facilities to facilitate electricity access to unelectrified primary rural health centres.
- The Agency continues to offer tailored capacity building trainings on long term energy planning, where LLDCs (Eswatini, Mali, and Niger), alongside other countries, participated in the regional workshops on Energy System Planning.