

Check Against Delivery

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

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

SIDE EVENT AT: COP26 Water Pavilion in Hall 4

Your intervention: Opening remarks, 5 minutes

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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- It is my great pleasure to participate in this event. Let me extend my gratitude to the co-organisers of this event, UN-OHRLLS, UNDESA and the Government of Tajikistan, all of whom are also close partners of IRENA.
- And the topic we are discussing today is aptly linking several inseparable issues. If we ever needed a further reminder of deep-rooted vulnerabilities of many nations, and inequalities across economies and geographies, COVID 19 pandemic has shown these with a great intensity. And we see that overcoming the challenges must start with some essential prerequisites.
- This is why the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) clearly puts energy as one of its fundamental priorities. Without energy, access to water, health services and information is hampered. Unreliable and outdated energy systems cannot drive prosperity of economies and communities. And air pollution and climate change concerns shift focus toward modern and clean energy sources.
- It is essential to make the right choices as we look beyond the health crisis. Unlike any others, the renewable energy sector has shown a remarkable resilience in the past two years. The cost for solar and wind power continued to decline, with new solar and wind projects increasingly undercutting even the cheapest and least sustainable existing coal-fired

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power plants. And the number of jobs in the sector increased by 500,000 to 12 million worldwide.

- But this positive trend is yet to be realized in LLDCs. LLDCs have great potential to produce renewable energy ranging from hydropower, to solar, wind, bioenergy, and geothermal sources. Still, 58 per cent of people in these nations live without energy access. This is not acceptable, especially when we have the solutions at hand.
- Enabling access through renewable energy will ensure clean water, adequate nutrition, job creation, and education among others. It will open avenues for industrial development and resilience of the system in the face of changing climate.
- Support to LLDCs through technical advice and capacity building for renewables is IRENA's priority.
- We are very pleased to be working with UN-OHRLLS on a joint report on *Scaling Up Renewable Energy in LLDCs*. The report will include recommendations and actions on how to build a renewables-based and resilient energy system, close the energy access gap and harness the socio-economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy.
- We are also providing direct support to countries, and the past year has been dedicated to enhancing renewable energy ambitions in NDCs. We have worked with 70 countries, including Mali, Niger, Uganda, Botswana, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Paraguay, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.
- We aim to provide very practical support based on our extensive expertise. For instance, we deploy the Renewable Readiness Assessment (RRA) in coordination with governments to help understand how to improve the conditions for renewables deployment. At the moment, RRA implementation is ongoing for Burkina Faso, and Kyrgyzstan, with a recent RRA being completed for Botswana and Paraguay.
- Another example, especially relevant for our discussion today is IRENA's technical support to advance the deployment of renewables for health facilities. We are now working with Burkina Faso on an assessment for the

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electrification of rural health facilities, and we will expand this program in several other counties.

- Let me briefly reflect on investment – including the private sector investment – which is a major barrier for LLDCs. We have shifted our institutional focus toward this area, and have created the Climate Investment Platform with our colleagues from UNDP, SE4ALL and GCF. We are already seeing a great interest in CIP and have made progress in creating a pipeline of projects. As soon as the conditions allow, we will organize investment forums in all regions to support matchmaking and make this pipeline a reality. Moreover, together with the Government of the UAE, we today launched the Energy Transition Accelerator Facility, a fund that will mobilise 1 billion USD capital to developing countries to accelerate the scale of renewable energy deployment to meet the climate and development priorities. The UAE generously pledged 400 million already, and we will be operationalizing this Facility in the coming months.
- Let me conclude by saying that you can fully count on IRENA's support through our vast repository of analysis, data, and products and our collaborative efforts with all our Members to ensure that the energy transition in LLDCs is achievable, sustainable and just.
- Thank you.