

Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries

Theme: Partnering for accelerated implementation of the VPoA and achieving sustainable development in LLDCs in the era of COVID-19

Statement of Francesco La Camera, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

Affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern, and renewable energy for all is a key enabler for development, and it is rightly recognised as a priority in the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs.

While notable progress has been made in recent years, the proportion of the population in LLDCs without access to electricity was still about 40 per cent in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic brings further challenges to electrify these last 40 per cent and to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.

Sustainable energy is essential for both: short-term response to the pandemic, for powering essential services such as health facilities, as well as the medium to long term response as it brings a range of socio-economic benefits.

As stated by the UN Secretary-General in his opening remarks at the 75th Session of the General Assembly, a sustainable New Social Contract means transitioning towards renewable energy to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. And renewables are already cheaper than the new built coal power plants highly pollutant for the environment.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) as the world's lead intergovernmental organisation for energy transformation is working closely with its 161 Members, including most LLDCs, to promote this transition towards renewable energy in the context of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as the VPoA.

IRENA supports LLDCs through advice and capacity building on policy, enhancement of renewable energy ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), development of bankable projects and access to finance as well as advice on technical-related aspects of renewable energy deployment.

As an example, through its Renewables Readiness Assessments (RRAs), IRENA helps LLDCs to harness their renewable energy potential to the full extent. Through its RRAs tool, IRENA helps LLDCs to identify existing policy and

regulatory limitations, while offering recommendations to maximise countries' full and unique resource potential. To date, RRAs have been conducted in 7 LLDCs, including Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Mali, Mongolia, Niger, the Republic of Moldova and Zambia. RRAs are also underway currently in Botswana and Paraguay, and in the planning phase for Burkina Faso, and Kyrgyzstan

A notable example of IRENA's country-level work in LLDCs is the development of the Eswatini Energy Masterplan 2034. The roadmap was developed as a result of the joint Energy Planning Capacity-Building Programme.

Another example is the assessment of health sector energy needs covering rural health care facilities in Burkina Faso, where IRENA will provide the optimised technical designs of decentralised renewable energy-powered rural health services, delivery models, policy and institutional recommendations and also consider how renewables can help power the response to COVID-19.

IRENA is actively scoping possible support to LLDCs including Eswatini, Mali, Niger, North Macedonia, Uganda, Botswana, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Paraguay, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in enhancing their NDCs through setting ambitious renewable energy targets, developing energy roadmaps and project facilitation.

Climate Investment Platform (CIP), launched by IRENA, SEforALL and UNDP, in cooperation with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), addresses challenges in terms of attracting renewables investments. The Agency is taking active steps towards the operationalisation of the CIP by preparing investment forums targeted to create enabling conditions for renewable investment, including LLDCs.

I have made a partnership with the United Nations a critical priority. In this context, and we are very appreciative of the support of the USG's Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu to this effort which is strengthened through the IRENA and UNOHRLLS MoU aimed at advancing energy transition in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

We very much welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. An important deliverable under this roadmap would be the preparation of a joint action-oriented report with UNOHRLLS on scaling up renewable energy in LLDCs. The report would focus in particular on the challenges facing LLDCs in terms of attracting renewables investments.

In conclusion, we wish to assure you of IRENA's full support LLDCs Group. We fully concur that the fight against the socio-economic impact of the pandemic requires strong partnerships and collaboration.

Francesco La Camera
Director-General, IRENA