



HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT AT: UN Water Conference

Accelerating the achievement of SDG 6 in LLDCs

Thursday 23rd March, Trusteeship Council UNHQ 3:30 pm – 5pm.

Concept Note

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) – to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all –is a key enabler for achieving the other SDGs. However, despite this importance, the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) lag behind the collective ambition to ensure universal access to water and sanitation by 2030.

The latest data show that 68% of the population in LLDCs had access to basic drinking water services in 2020 whilst the global average is 90%. Estimates for the population using safely managed drinking water services in LLDCs is even lower, at 35.5% when compared to a global average of 74.3%. Over time the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services in LLDCs has increased from 30.9% in 2010 to 35.5%. While this is some progress, the progress has been slow.

There is wide disparity between urban and rural areas. In 2020 the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services in LLDCs was 66% in urban areas compared to 21.5% in rural areas. This glaring gaps between rural and urban areas, need to be closed in order to ensure inclusivity.

With regard to sanitation in 2020, only 31% of the population in LLDCs were using safely managed sanitation services compared to a world average of 54%. The progress on sanitation has been slow in LLDCs, it rose from 27.9% in 2010 to 31% in 2020 whereas the world average rose from 39.9% to 54% for the same time period. There are also wide disparities between countries and regions, as well as urban and rural areas.

Frequent and proper hand hygiene is essential to containing COVID-19 and controlling other infectious diseases. Yet, over 1 in 4 people still lack access to handwashing facilities with soap and water at home. Coverage increased from 67 per cent to 71 per cent from 2015 to 2020

Water is fundamental to delivering almost all the SDGs including health, food security, industrialization, renewable electricity generation, connecting countries to seaports for their international trade, and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and other infectious diseases.

The provision of safe and clean sources of water is a necessity for human survival and a right to development yet many LLDCs face severe challenges, including water stress, climate change, growing demand and deterioration of water quality. Many LLDCs are located in dry and other ecologically vulnerable regions and their water challenges are being exacerbated by climate change, desertification, drought and land degradation - as well as water-related natural hazards. This, in turn, affects human health, economic activities, and food and energy supplies. Urgent action is needed to ensure a sustainable access to water.

Solutions to increase access water do exist. Water harvesting, conservation strategies, integrated water resources management and desalination technologies. These can have a greater role to play. Scaling up such initiatives is important for supporting the LLDCs to reach the SDGs, combat the climate crisis, and build lives of dignity for all.

LLDCs need continued, strong support from development partners - in the North and South - to complement their national efforts and regional collaboration on developing access to all for water and sanitation. Enhanced support is required towards financing and sustainable water technologies and better sanitation technologies. Greater efforts are also needed to mobilize all the other stakeholders to contribute to efforts to increase access to water and sanitation in LLDCs.

Objective

This Side Event will review the progress made by LLDCs towards achieving SDG 6; discuss the challenges that they face; and identify successful solutions and strategic actions that can be adopted, adapted or scaled up in LLDCs to close the gap and to accelerate progress towards SDG 6.

The event will encourage participants to identify new and emerging issues, exchange national and local experiences and practices, and showcase voluntary commitments for the Water Action Agenda that include Commit to action: sustain and scale up implementation; and follow-up and review processes.

Expected Outcome

The event will increase awareness on the special needs of LLDCs on water and sanitation and the opportunities and policy recommendations for accelerating achievement of SDG 6.

Its outcome will feed into the preparatory process of the Third UN Conference on LLDCs to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2024.

Participants will include Member States, United Nations organizations, as well as representatives from academia, the private sector and civil society.

Language

The event will be held in English.

Possible questions for discussion:

- *What are the challenges that your country/region is facing in implementing SDG6? Are there any new emerging issues?*
- *What successful solutions are available for LLDCs to sustain and scale up implementation of SDG6?*
- *What type of technical assistance and financial assistance is needed to build the capacity of LLDCs to accelerate progress on SDG6?*