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NEWSLETTER

**EMPOWERING THE MOST VULNERABLE NATIONS:
UPDATES, INSIGHTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**



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Dear Colleagues and Partners,

This special edition of the OHRLLS Newsletter spotlights the Third LDC Future Forum, held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 1–3 April 2025. The Forum brought together over 250 high-level officials, policymakers, researchers, private sector leaders, and development partners from more than 50 countries to explore innovative pathways for strengthening resilience in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) through strategic partnerships and collective action.

Over three impactful days, participants engaged in evidence-based discussions on climate-smart agriculture, innovative financing, sustainable water and energy solutions, circular economy models, and social protection systems—all critical to enhancing LDCs' resilience against systemic shocks such as climate change, economic instability, and health crises. The Forum served as a vibrant platform for exchanging best practices, policy insights, and cutting-edge research aligned with accelerating the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This issue highlights key thematic sessions and outcomes, including high-level dialogues on financing strategies and private sector innovations, underscoring the urgent need for proactive, inclusive, and technology-driven approaches to foster sustainable development and facilitate LDCs' graduation from the category with resilience and stability.



Ms. Rabab Fatima

Under Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Data Spotlight



NIRJHOR BRIDGE, BANGLADESH © MD TANVIR MEHADI SHOYON/GETTY IMAGES

Did You Know?

Access to electricity in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) increased substantially from 37.8% in 2012 to 58.6% in 2023. Nevertheless, this remains significantly below the global average of 91.7%, with an estimated 476.7 million people in LDCs still lacking access. Stark disparities persist between urban and rural areas, where access rates stand at 82.9% and 45.6%, respectively. To bridge this gap, more investment is required in both electrical grid and off-grid solutions.

To learn more about how countries are categorized as LDCs, click [here](#).

OHRLLS on Social Media



Financing resilience in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is essential for reducing vulnerabilities to systemic shocks such as climate change, economic instability, and health crises.

From April 1-3 in Lusaka, Zambia, we will meet to explore solutions that align with the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The High-Level Dialogue at the Forum will focus on innovative financing mechanisms to support resilience-building and sustainable development in LDCs.



The LDC Future Forum is more than just an event—it is a catalyst for progress and a unique opportunity to share research, policy recommendations, and best practices to support LDCs on their development journey.

By bringing together policymakers, researchers, and development partners, the forum fosters collaboration and innovation, paving the way for practical solutions that enhance resilience and advance the goals of the Doha Programme of Action. We thank the Government of Finland 🇫🇮 for its support in making this important event possible.



Systemic shocks such as climate change, economic instability, and health crises disproportionately impact Least Developed Countries (LDCs), threatening their sustainable development and progress.

The 3rd LDC Future Forum will bring together policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to explore innovative solutions that build resilience and address these challenges.



High-Level Opening Session

The Forum was officially opened by H.E. President of Zambia Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, who was joined by our Under-Secretary-General and High Representative Rabab Fatima and honourable Ministers from Zambia, Finland and Malawi. In his remarks, President Hichilema stressed the urgent need for resilience in LDCs, highlighting transformation through enhanced financing, climate-smart agriculture, and clean energy. The opening session set the tone for three days of dialogue, calling for a shift from reliance on aid to proactive, homegrown solutions and stronger collective responses to future shocks.

Ministerial Roundtable: Finding a Way to a Resilient Future

The Ministerial Roundtable highlighted successful resilience-building experiences and strategic interventions that have supported LDCs in withstanding systemic shocks, such as climate change and economic instability. Ministers and experts discussed innovative solutions, from local capacity development to inclusive partnerships, stressing the importance of integrating these approaches into national policies. The roundtable called for greater international solidarity and knowledge sharing to help LDCs overcome persistent vulnerabilities and harness their potential for growth, ensuring that resilience-building remains central to their development agendas.



High-Level Dialogue on Innovative Financing Mechanisms

The High-level Dialogue on Innovative Financing Mechanisms explored transformative financial models—blended finance, green bonds, and local resource mobilization—to unlock investment in LDCs. Panelists discussed challenges, such as limited access to affordable finance and high borrowing costs, exacerbated by a decline in ODA. The dialogue emphasized the critical role of partnerships with the public, private, and philanthropic sectors in mobilizing resources, alongside creative approaches to financing climate resilience and sustainable growth.

Thematic Session 1: Climate-Smart Agriculture

Experts and innovators shared strategies to advance climate-smart agriculture in LDCs, addressing the mounting threats of climate change, food insecurity, and resource constraints. The session showcased digital technologies, anticipatory action, and regional cooperation as vital for resilience. Participants stressed the need for investments in infrastructure, capacity development, and inclusive governance to ensure benefits reach smallholder farmers. The discussion concluded with a call for integrated approaches that blend traditional knowledge with new science, positioning climate-smart agriculture as both a technical solution and a pathway to systemic, inclusive development.



Thematic Session 2: Water Management and Renewable Energy

This session addressed sustainable water management and renewable energy integration as foundations for resilience in LDCs. Panelists shared strategies for tackling climate change and resource scarcity, emphasizing scalable and gender-sensitive solutions. Innovative projects in water security and renewable energy were showcased, highlighting their potential to support economic growth and climate adaptation. Participants agreed that investing in these sectors is essential for driving long-term, inclusive development in LDCs.





High-Level Dialogue on Key Initiatives for Resilience

Government officials and experts highlighted transformative investments and practical strategies that drive economic transformation, climate resilience, and social protection. The session showcased initiatives under the Doha Programme of Action, green growth projects, and national approaches to sustainable development. Key takeaways included the necessity of cross-sectoral collaboration, robust public-private partnerships, and alignment of national priorities with global frameworks to achieve tangible, lasting impacts in LDCs.

Thematic Session 3: Economic Diversification and Circular Economy

This session examined how LDCs can achieve sustainable growth through economic diversification and circular economy approaches. Participants discussed the vast untapped potential of LDCs—including renewable resources and young populations—and practical tools to reduce waste and build resilience. Examples from Africa and Asia illustrated successful transitions to greener industries, e-waste management, and innovative textile recycling. The discussion highlighted the importance of partnerships, technology transfer, and supportive policies to transform LDC economies and enhance their global competitiveness.



Thematic Session 4: Social Safety Nets for Community Resilience

Thematic session four focused on adaptive social protection as a cornerstone for resilient, inclusive development. Participants explored how targeted, flexible social safety nets can help vulnerable communities withstand multiple crises—climate, health, and economic shocks. The importance of proactive approaches, digital tools, and robust partnerships was emphasized, alongside the need for greater domestic investment and integration with broader development strategies. Case studies from Tanzania and Burundi demonstrated the transformative impact of well-designed social protection programmes.



Fireside Chat: The Role of Partnerships

During the Fireside Chat, panelists explored innovative partnership models that drive climate adaptation, economic diversification, and sustainable growth in LDCs. Discussions highlighted the need for strong multi-stakeholder collaboration—across governments, private sector, and civil society—to build resilience and respond to mounting global challenges. Best practices included blue economy initiatives, green financing, and technology-driven solutions, reinforcing that partnership is indispensable for transformative change and inclusive development.





Roundtable on Monitoring Doha Programme of Action (DPoA)

This roundtable examined strategies to strengthen monitoring and follow-up mechanisms for the DPoA at all levels. Participants called for enhanced data systems, harmonized indicators, and greater stakeholder engagement to improve accountability and address implementation gaps. Integration with global frameworks –SDGs, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Agreement–was discussed, alongside innovative funding models and civil society participation to support evidence-based policymaking and effective resource mobilization.

Future Shapers of Resilience Building in LDCs

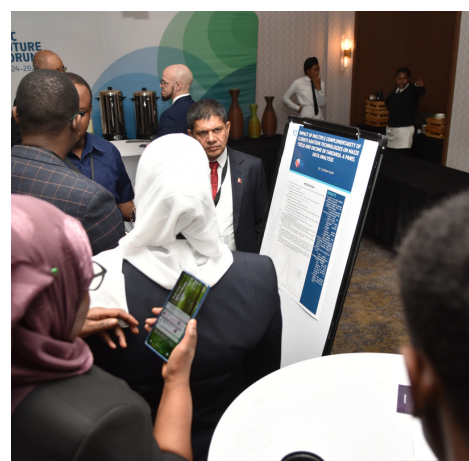
Youth representatives and researchers presented next-generation ideas and best practices for building resilience in LDCs. Poster presentations and interactive discussions fostered dynamic exchanges on innovative solutions, with a strong emphasis on youth perspectives, digital transformation, and inclusive policy design. This session underscored the importance of harnessing the creativity and expertise of young people to shape resilient, sustainable futures for LDCs.



Closing Session

The Forum was officially closed by Under-Secretary-General and High Representative Rabab Fatima and high-level speakers from Zambia and Finland. USG Fatima's remarks reflected on the event's success and the historic significance of hosting it in an LDC. The high-level speakers agreed that actionable plans for resilience and sustainable development had been laid out under the DPoA, and called for continued coordination and implementation in the lead-up to future conferences. The importance of innovation, partnerships, and capacity-building was reiterated as central to delivering on the Forum's vision for LDCs.

Poster Presentations



Participants at the forum



Key Links

Statements by Ms. Rabab Fatima

Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

- [Remarks by Ms. Rabab Fatima at Welcome Reception for LDC Future Forum - 31 March 2025](#)
- [Opening statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the annual meeting of the LDCs National Focal Points - 31 March 2025](#)
- [Opening statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Third LDC Future Forum - 01 April 2025](#)
- [Closing statement by Ms. Rabab Fatima at the Third LDC Future Forum - 03 April 2025](#)

[Doha Programme of Action](#)

[ABAS](#)

[PoA for LLDCs](#)

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