Lessons Learned

Implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011 - 2020

Preliminary Report

UN-OHRLLS

supporting
Least Developed Countries
Landlocked Developing Countries
Small Island Developing States

United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

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INTRODUCTION

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) was adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (*hereafter* LDCs) in Istanbul, Turkey in May 2011. The IPoA is an ambitious 10-year policy agenda agreed by the international community to address the challenges faced by the LDCs, based on the fundamental tenets of mutual accountability and enhanced international cooperation (United Nations, 2011).

The overall objective of the IPoA is to overcome the structural problems encountered by the LDCs, in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and ultimately, enable graduation from the LDC category. The IPoA was divided into eight priority areas to be achieved by the end of 2020. These are as follows: (i) Productive Capacity (ii) Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development (iii) Trade (iv) Commodities (v) Human and Social Development, (vi) Mobilising Financial Resources for Development and Capacity Building (vii) Multiple Crises and Other Emerging Challenges (viii) Good Governance at All Levels.

As the decade of the IPoA draws to a close and in preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference of the LDCs, the Office of the High Representative of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), called upon all LDC member states to submit national reports on the progress of implementation of the IPoA. A total of 28 reports[1] were submitted to OHRLLS. OHRLLS is grateful to all countries who contributed and shared their experiences.

In line with the aim of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), this report aims to undertake a full assessment of the implementation of the program of action by LDCs and their development partners. The report shares best practices and lessons learned, whilst highlighting the challenges that hindered the LDCs from meeting the objectives set out in the IPoA, as well as necessary actions and initiatives to overcome them.

The report draws upon the extensive National Reports and several relevant supporting publications to capture the overall progress of the LDCs in the implementation of the IPoA. Given the level of detail in each national report, this report synthesises the reoccurring themes across the 3 regions (Asian and Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean), highlighting key country experiences to illustrate the lessons learned to achieve the IPoA objectives during the decade of implementation[2].

While the national reports were largely prepared during the pre-COVID-19 era, the final synthesis report will include some analysis of the impact of COVID on the achievement of the IPoA objectives.

The format of the report is as follows: Chapter 1 focuses on the overall progress of the LDC category in achieving the overarching objectives of the IPoA. Chapter 2 highlights the significant efforts

[1] The following reports were submitted: Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Zambia. These reports are available at https://www.un.org/ldc5/content/documents. Solomon Islands has submitted a draft report.

[2] All 47 LDCs have been featured in the report

amongst the LDCs under the eight priority areas of the IPoA over the ten years of its implementation, noting both successes and challenges encountered in the process. Chapter 3 concludes the report noting the way forward and Chapter 4 is the summary table of successful initiatives highlighted for each priority area.

1.0 OVERALL PROGRESS OF THE LDCs

The overarching goal of the IPoA is to overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the LDC category. Prior to COVID-19, which had significant effects on the socio-economic fabric of the LDCs, progress was made on some economic indicators and targets set forth in the IPoA. However, several LDCs have not met the overarching objectives.

Since the establishment of the LDC category in 1971 by the United Nations, just five countries have graduated from the category, and currently 12 LDCs are in different stages of the graduation process. *Table 1* shows the stages at which the 12 LDCs have currently reached in the graduation process. Since the adoption of the IPoA in 2011, progress towards meeting the graduation criteria has accelerated, with an increasing number of LDCs approaching the graduation thresholds. For example, Lesotho and Togo, both met one criterion and came close to meeting another in 2018 (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). The 2018 triennial review showed that Zambia had met two of the three graduation criteria (Zambia National Report, 2019). In 2018, 17 countries met the income criteria up from 14 in 2015. With regards to the human assets index, the number of countries meeting the threshold increased from 9 to 12 from 2015 to 2018. For the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI), progress has been slower as it is currently met by only 9 LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). Meanwhile, nearly half of the countries (22) have not yet met the graduation threshold of any of the LDC graduation criteria.

Table 1: Graduation progress of the 12 eligible LDCs against the graduation criteria[3]

		GNI per capita (US$ 2014 -16 average)	Human assets	Economic vulnerability
Inclusion threshold		**≥ 1,025**	**≥ 60**	**≤ 36**
Graduation threshold		**≥ 1,230**	**≥ 66**	**≤ 32**
Year 0: First triennial review. CDP finds country eligible for the first time and DESA notifies the country				
	LDCs eligible for graduation for the first time in 2018			
	Bangladesh	1,274	73.2	25.2
	Lao PDR	1,996	72.8	33.7
	Myanmar	1,255	68.5	31.7

[3]Data from CDP 2018 triennial review report. Available at https://undocs.org/en/E/2018/33

Year 0-3: Vulnerability profile (UNCTAD) and ex-ante impact assessment (UN DESA) are created				
Year 3: Second triennial review: LDC meets graduation criteria for the second time. CDP recommends graduation, ECOSOC endorses, UN General Assembly takes note of the recommendation				
	LDCs eligible for graduation for the second consecutive time and recommended to ECOSOC for graduation (scheduled graduation year)			
	Bhutan (2023)	2,401	72.9	36.3
	Sao Tome and Principe (2024)	1,684	86	41.2
	Solomon Islands (2024)	1,763	74.8	51.9
	LDCs eligible for graduation for the second consecutive time but not recommended for graduation by CDP			
	Nepal	745	71.2	28.4
	Timor Leste	2,656	66.6	56.8
	LDCs consideration for graduation recommendation deferred by ECOSOC (by 2021)			
	Kiribati	2,986	84	73.7
	Tuvalu	5,388	90.1	56
Year 3 – 6: Graduating LDC prepares a smooth transition strategy (supported by UN system and in cooperation with development and trading partners)				
	Scheduled to graduate: LDCs on the graduation path since 2015			
	Vanuatu (2020)	3,014	78.5	47
	Angola (2021)	4,477	52.5	36.8
Year 6: Graduation becomes effective				
Year 6+: Development partners support the implementation of transition strategy and seek to avoid abrupt reduction of LDC specific support				
	Graduated countries Botswana (1994), Cape Verde (2007), Maldives (2011), Samoa (2014), Equatorial Guinea (2017)			

Source of info: Data from CDP 2018 triennial review report. Available at https://undocs.org/en/E/2018/33

Poverty Reduction

Eradication of poverty provides a good measure of the overall success in the implementation of the IPoA. However, Poverty remains a pressing challenge in LDCs. The 2020 State of LDCs Report *(Upcoming)* shows that the rate of extreme poverty in the LDCs, measured as the population living below $1.90 per day was about 35 per cent in 2018 declining from about 40 per cent in 2011 (see *Table 2*).

Poverty rates continue to be alarmingly high in the LDCs, exacerbated by COVID-19. Recent projections by the World Bank suggest that COVID-19 has led to an increase in extreme poverty globally by between 88 million and 114 million people, the largest increase in extreme poverty since 1990. While extreme poverty was predominantly rural before COVID-19, the World Bank projections indicate that the new poor are more urban, better educated and work in industries such as informal services, construction and manufacturing (Wall street Journal, 7 October 2020)[4].

Table 2: Poverty estimates using 2011 PPP and $1.9/day poverty line

Year	Poverty line (PPP$/day)	Headcount (%)	Poverty gap (%)	Squared poverty gap
2018	1.90	35.0861	13.5203	7.13786
2017	1.90	36.0178	13.7336	7.21376
2016	1.90	36.9477	13.9011	7.24647
2015	1.90	36.8793	13.7444	7.12109
2014	1.90	36.6683	13.6084	7.03955
2013	1.90	37.2396	13.9089	7.23336
2012	1.90	38.0562	14.275	7.46601
2011	1.90	39.5884	15.0407	7.94873
2010	1.90	40.8787	15.81	8.47429
2009	1.90	42.424	16.6411	9.03705
2008	1.90	43.1498	16.7647	9.03209
2007	1.90	44.636	17.6441	9.62642
2006	1.90	46.5413	18.6641	10.3122
2005	1.90	48.4932	19.721	11.0048
2004	1.90	51.4554	21.1369	11.8007
2003	1.90	55.3237	23.1431	12.9549
2002	1.90	56.0287	23.8404	13.5325
2001	1.90	56.4293	24.422	14.04
2000	1.90	58.3947	25.6258	14.7862

Source: PovcalNet: the online tool for poverty measurement developed by the Development Research Group of the World Bank. Available at http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/povOnDemand.aspx

A few LDCs made notable progress in reducing the percentage of poverty during the IPoA decade. In Bhutan, income poverty reduced from 23 per cent in 2007 to 8 per cent in 2017 and multidimensional poverty reduced from 12.7 per cent in 2012 to 5.8 per cent in 2017 with rural and urban poverty rates at 8.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively (Bhutan National Report, 2019). Similarly, the poverty headcount at $1.90 a day in Bangladesh significantly reduced from 18.2 per cent in 2011 to 7.7 per cent in 2018. In Lao PDR, poverty headcount declined from 22.7 per cent to

[4] https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-has-thrown-around-100-million-people-into-extreme-poverty-world-bank-estimates-11602086400

8 per cent between 2011 and 2018 (World Bank, PovCalNet)[5],[6]. The decline in poverty rates in Lao PDR mirrored rapid GDP growth and rising farm incomes. Since 2013, agricultural households have moved from subsistence rice cultivation toward the commercial production of cash crops. However, the disappearance of off-farm jobs has slowed poverty reduction. Since 2013, the industry sector has created few jobs, while the service sector has grown slowly. Remittances helped make up for lost non-farm income[7].

In Bangladesh, the strategies for eradicating poverty included; ensuring faster growth, providing social protection for the most vulnerable population and job creation (Government of Bangladesh Voluntary National Review, 2017). The implementation of the Gambia Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative, and the Togo Accelerated Growth and Job Creation Strategy 2013-2017 supported poverty reduction efforts in these countries (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). The Gambia's poverty headcount ratio at $1.90 a day declined from 27.5 per cent in 2011 to 9.1 per cent in 2018. In Togo, the poverty headcount declined more slowly from 55 per cent to 46.4 per cent, during the same time period (World Bank, (World Bank PovCalNet)[8].

Through the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Fund, Lao People's Democratic Republic reported a decline in poverty. In order to enhance agriculture and food security the government also adopted and implemented the Agriculture Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030; created a Policy Research Center; adopted and implemented the Agriculture and Forestry Sector Development Plan 2016-2020; passed a moratorium on logging; and adopted SDG indicator 2.1.2 as a guide towards sustainable food security (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

Togo reported a decline in poverty, with higher inequality in northern than southern regions as well as in rural than urban area mainly through implementing the Accelerated Growth and Job Creation Strategy 2013-2017. To increase farmers' incomes and improve rural and vulnerable populations' living conditions, the government implemented the Agricultural Development Support Project, the Agricultural Sector Support Project and the West African Agricultural Productivity Project. The Community Development Emergency Programme was established to reduce regional inequalities and foster social inclusion and a National Fund for Inclusive Finance was created to provide financing for those excluded by the banking system. Togo ensures that its National Development Plan 2018-2022 will boost economic growth, create jobs, increase banking coverage, increase local transformation of agricultural products, reduce the agricultural trade deficit and lead to the implementation of incentive financing mechanisms (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

Economic Growth

One of the objectives of the IPoA is to *achieve sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth in LDCs, to at least the level of 7 per cent per annum*. However, the decade of the IPoA has been a

[5] Extracted on 05 December 2020 at http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/povOnDemand.aspx
[6] Note that reported poverty levels assessed at the national level are different to the internationally comparable PovCalNet data. For details on the latest national statistics, see https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/publication/lao-pdr-poverty-profile-and-poverty-assessment-2020
[7] https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/publication/lao-pdr-poverty-profile-and-poverty-assessment-2020
[8] Extracted on 05 December 2020 at http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/povOnDemand.aspx

challenge for the LDCs to secure and sustain high level growth. Most of the LDCs instead witnessed slow economic expansion, severe growth instability and remain highly susceptible to external shocks. Such instability has been persistent, despite recent rises in the rate of economic growth across these most vulnerable countries. As a group, the LDCs recorded fluctuating economic growth rates over the IPoA decade. The rate increased from 4.3 per cent in 2011 to 5.7 per cent in 2013 before dropping to 5.3 per cent in 2014 and 3.8 per cent in 2015 and rising again to 4.7 per cent in 2018 with a projected growth of 4.9 per cent in 2019 (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

Collectively, the LDCs were unable to attain the IPoA target of 7 per cent. Overall, the limited economic progress observed in LDCs as a group was due to several factors at the global, regional and domestic levels. Globally, weakened export demand from emerging economies, fiscal consolidation in many developed countries, decreasing commodity prices and net capital outflows from LDCs. Combined with volatile flows of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and investment to LDCs, these factors reduced domestic demand and economic growth. For some LDCs, growing regional insecurity, protracted conflict, natural disasters and weather-driven supply shocks, especially in agriculture, hampered economic activity.

Interestingly, the positive growth trends from 2011 to 2013 and from 2015 to 2019 were driven by strong growth rates from Asia-Pacific LDCs, while from 2013 to 2015, African LDCs reported higher growth rates than Asia-Pacific LDCs. The latter was driven by the oil sector and other commodities. Disaggregated data by region shows that Asia-Pacific LDCs are expected to reach the 7 per cent growth mark in 2019 for the first time, while neither African LDCs nor Haiti have achieved this goal in the IPoA decade (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). The slight improvements in growth were driven by factors including rising investment, increased industrial production, trade and strengthened consumer confidence (United Nations, 2018b).

The aggregate rate of GDP growth for the LDCs masks wide differences in growth performance among the LDCs and among the first and second half of the IPoA implementation period. While before 2015, 10 or more LDCs grew at 7 per cent or more with a peak of 15 LDCs in 2012, this figure decreased to 4 LDCs (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Rwanda and Uganda) (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). These high growth rates were primarily driven by construction, manufacturing, exports, mining, real estate, transport and communications industries (National Reports, 2019). The positive growth performance however was insufficient for LDCs to accelerate structural transformation and reduce dependence on external resources (foreign savings) to finance fixed investment and development (UNCTAD, 2019b).

With the anticipated global recession, due to COVID-19, the April 2020 IMF World Economic Outlook projects negative changes in real GDP growth rates around the world. For Sub-Saharan Africa, the IMF projects a negative real GDP growth rate of -1.6 per cent in 2020 (IMF, 2020). While most LDCs' growth is projected to be less affected according to the IMF's projections, the negative growth rates of advanced and emerging economies will likely adverse the few positive growth projections. The tremendous fall of the oil price especially hits those LDCs who are heavily reliant on oil exports. Furthermore, island LDCs will largely suffer from the reduced tourism.

2.0 PRIORITY AREAS

Over the last decade, progress in achieving the IPoA targets has been mixed and uneven varying within and across the eight priority areas and 3 regions. LDCs have progressed too slowly towards achievement of their objectives under the IPoA and SDGs, largely due to minimal progress in structural transformation. The Report further notes the failure of the international community to create a conducive international economic environment for structural transformation in the LDCs as a reason for the minimal progress (UNOHRLLS, 2019b; UNCTAD, 2019).

2.1 PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

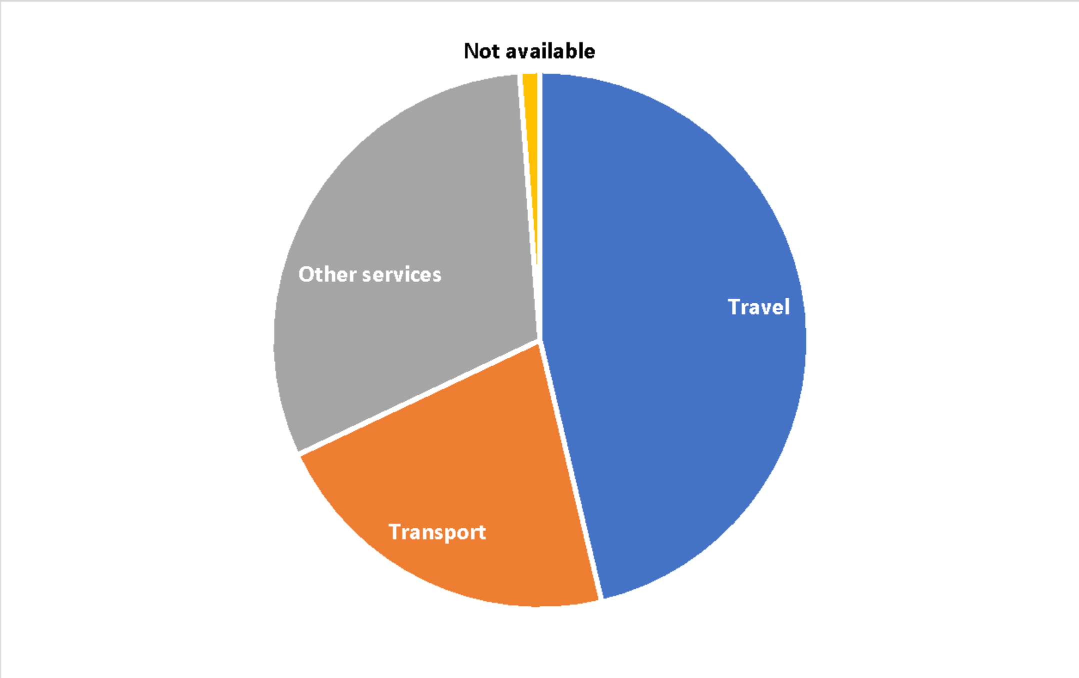
Building productive capacity is essential for achieving high and sustainable growth, structural transformation, and creation of employment and decent jobs. Thus, enhancing productive capacity and achieving structural transformation in LDCs, is a central priority of the IPoA (UNOHRLLS, 2019a). However, only modest improvements were made under this priority area, with the contribution to GDP of the three economic sectors changing only slightly. The share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries remained roughly constant around 21 per cent, manufacturing and the services shares increased marginally by 2 percentage points to 12 and 45 per cent of GDP, respectively from 2011 to 2017[9]. Gross fixed capital formation increased slightly from 26 to 28 per cent indicating a small increase of construction and purchase of equipment in LDCs which potentially contributes to enhancing productive capacity (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

However, investigating separately the value added to GDP of the three economic sectors in African and Asia-Pacific LDCs unveils that the persistence of the aggregates is partly driven by offsetting changes in Africa and Asia Pacific. While for African and Asia-Pacific LDCs the value added of the manufacturing sector as a percentage of GDP only increased a little in the IPoA decade, Asia-Pacific LDCs report a share twice as high as African LDCs. In African LDCs the share of agriculture, forestry and fishing rose from 21.0 per cent to 24.2 per cent. On the contrary, the share decreased from 21.4 per cent to 16.2 per cent in Asia-Pacific LDCs. The latter report also a stronger increase in value added share of services from 44.1 per cent in 2011 to 47.8 per cent in 2017, whereas African LDCs reported an increase to 43.4 per cent from 42.1 per cent for the same period (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

Thus, the services sector is the most important contributor to growth, contributing to 45 per cent of GDP growth in all LDCs in 2017. A major hindrance to building productive capacity across the LDCs has been low investment rates combined with institutional bottlenecks, limited human resource development and lack of infrastructure (State of LDCs report, 2016). As a result, ICT-based services, tourism, and transport are outpacing the growth of manufacturing in many African LDCs, and services exports have grown much faster than merchandise exports (UNOHRLLS, 2018a).

[9]Where appropriate, averages for the least developed countries are weighted by absolute numbers of population or economic variables used in the denominator throughout this report.

Figure 1: Services exports – All LDCs, 2017



Source of data: UNCTADStats, 2020.

A further disaggregation of services exports reveals that travel services exports are a crucial driver for LDCs' services exports. The importance of the latter even increased during the IPoA implementation period from 41.8 to 46.3 per cent of total trade in services. Adding transport services exports, the cumulative share of travel and transport services increased from 61 per cent in 2011 to 67 per cent of total trade in services in 2016. In comparison, the world's average in travel services stagnated at a rate between 24 and 25 per cent of total trade in services, while the average of transport services even decreased from 20 to 17 per cent in the IPoA implementation period. Goods-related services only marginally contribute to services exports with only Myanmar reporting shares larger than 3 per cent of total trade in services. Although its contribution decreased by 7 percentage points from 2011 to 2017, figure 1 indicates that the category - other services - is responsible for around one third of the services exports. Disaggregating the services exports further shows that contributions from other services are mainly driven by telecommunications, computer and information services with 6.0 per cent, other business services with 9.7 per cent and government goods and services with 11.0 per cent of total trade in services. The relevance of construction exports decreased during the IPoA implementation period from 7.9 per cent in 2011 to 2.2 per cent of total trade in services in 2017 for all LDCs (UNCTADStats, 2020).[10]

Promoting Tourism and Expanding Aviation Infrastructure to Increase Economic Growth

Globally, tourism represents nearly 10 per cent of the world's GDP, 30 per cent of global services exports and is estimated to generate one in every 11 jobs in the world (WTO, 2016). The cross cutting and labour-intensive characteristics of tourism creates linkages to other economic sectors, positioning it as a valuable contributor to national development strategies (WTO, 2016). The LDC's average of international tourism receipts as a percentage of total exports has been continuously above the world's average in the IPoA decade. While the world's average rose from 5.5 to 6.7 per

[10] See description of the indicators on https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Index.html

cent from 2011 to 2017, international tourism receipts increased from 5.6 to 8.5 per cent of total exports in LDCs in this period. Excluding oil exporting LDCs, the share of total exports remained roughly the same around 12 per cent.

During the IPoA decade, the share of international tourism receipts in total exports increased by 3.0 percentage points for both the African LDCs and Asia-Pacific LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). In 2018, LDCs reported an increase to 27 million international arrival tourists and US$ 21 billion in receipts from international tourism. While the increase in international arrival tourists was mainly driven by a doubling of the latter in Asia-Pacific LDCs, both African and Asia-Pacific LDCs contributed to the increase in receipts from international tourism. However, this increase can be only seen in absolute numbers. The contribution to the world's total stayed roughly the same, around 2 per cent for international tourist arrivals and 1 per cent for receipts in the IPoA implementation period (World Bank Indicators, 2020)[11].

While the importance of business travel exports has increased from 9 to 13 per cent of total trade in services in LDCs with a peak of 16 per cent in 2015 driven by African LDCs, personal travel services still dominate the tourism sector. Contrarily to business travel exports, Asia-Pacific LDCs report a higher share in personal travel services of total trade in services than African LDCs which even reported a small decrease in this category. Therefore, Asia-Pacific LDCs mainly contributed to the LDC's growth in travel services with an increasing share of 10 percentage points in the IPoA period to 48 per cent in 2016. A possible explanation for this finding is the fact that 5 out of the 8 LDCs which are islands are situated in the Asia-Pacific region. For the islands, LDCs travel exports made up 80 per cent of total trade in services in 2018 having increased from 73 per cent in 2011 (UNCTADStats, 2020).

However, as the tourism sector has completely collapsed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this figure is likely to decrease in 2020. Tourism was among the main contributors, enabling the graduation of Cabo Verde, the Maldives and Samoa from their previous LDC status. The sector has potential for stimulating growth, promoting development, creating jobs, reducing poverty and improving the LDCs international reputations (UNWTO, 2017). Granted there are many benefits to LDCs developing this sector, there are also key challenges hindering the sector's potential. Inadequate transport, infrastructure policies and lack of decent accommodation limit the competitiveness of LDCs in the global tourism market.

Although tourism creates jobs opportunities, it requires skilled and trained human resources which requires training and capacity building. The lack of statistical data in LDCs can hinder the marketing intelligence which is key for attracting private sector and foreign direct investors. Natural disasters and pandemics have stalled the development of the tourism sector in some LDCs. In 2015, Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu and the 2015 earthquake in Nepal caused setbacks to the tourism sector in these countries. In such countries, risk management and resilience must be fully integrated (WTO, 2016).

Vanuatu's tourism industry has been key to the country's growth over the last decade despite instability in the world economy. The Investment Facilitation Section in the Ministry of Tourism was established to facilitate investment in the tourism and hospitality sector (Ministry of Tourism,

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[11] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL and https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.XP.ZS

Vanuatu, 2020). In 2013, the Ministry of Tourism developed the Vanuatu Strategic Tourism Action Plan 2014 -2018. The Plan identified 5 key areas and their objectives to enable tourism development. These key areas for development included delivering tourism benefits to the outer islands; enhancing tourism marketing to increase competitiveness; investing in planning and building relevant infrastructure i.e. ports, airports and town beautification and creating an effective and well resourced team. Since the Government of Vanuatu implemented the Vanuatu Strategic Tourism Action Plan 2014 -2018, the number of international tourist arrivals increased from 109, 000 in 2014 to 116, 000 in 2018, with a sharp decrease in 2015 to 90,000 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020a)[12]. International tourism receipts increased from US$ 254 million to US$ 325 million in 2018 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020b)[13].

With increased business opportunities in extractive industries, energy infrastructure, agribusiness and real estate, Guinea is fast becoming a hub for business tourism. Since 2013, Guinea has been boosting efforts to promote and attract business tourism by reviving old hotels and building new business hotels. In total, several hundred millions of Euros have been invested into the capital's hotel industry, nearly 2500 rooms have been created along with several thousands of jobs (indirect and direct) over the last 5 years. Most hotels have business conference facilities and meeting rooms allowing Guinea to match its supply to the growing business client demand. In 2016, 33,012 tourists visited for business (from 15,561 in 2014), 15,123 for family reasons (from 6,858 in 2014) and 4,564 for pleasure (from 3,042 in 2014) (Investing Guinea, 2019). Business travel exports increased from $US 0.2 million in 2011 to $US 15.6 million in 2017 which reflects an increase from 0.3 to 30 per cent of total trade in services for the same period (UNCTADStats, 2020).

In Uganda, the tourism sector has gained significant progress. To boost gross domestic product (GDP), the Government has made conscious efforts to improve tourism infrastructure, security and political stability. Organised marketing has also become a strategy to attract visitors from key source countries. As a result, visitor arrivals have increased from 945,899 in 2010/11 to 1,505,669 in 2018, earning the country foreign exchange revenue of USD1.6 billion in 2018 from USD 662 million in 2010 and USD 1,085 million in FY2013/14. The contribution of the tourism sector to GDP grew from 7.6% in 2010/11 to 9.9% in FY2014/15 before declining to 7.3% in FY2017/18 (Uganda National Report 2019).

In 2017, the Government of Sierra Leone adopted the National Tourism and National Ecotourism Policy, to ensure significant emphasis on the protection of the environment, in collaboration with the Environment Protection Agency and the National Protected Area Authority. In 2019, the visa on arrival policy was adopted, and public private partnerships in tourism development were promoted. These initiatives led to an increase in international visitor arrivals from 38,615 visitors in 2010 to 81,250 visitors in 2013. After the country was declared Ebola-free, the increase in international arrival between 2015 and 2016 almost tripled (Sierra Leone National Report, 2019).

Tourism development is dependent on air connectivity. To support the tourism and export industries, many LDCs, particularly in Africa, expanded aviation infrastructure during the IPoA implementation period. According to recent reports, air freight can help the LDCs to become globally competitive (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). Air freight increased from 971 to 2390 million ton-km from 2011

[12] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.ARVL?locations=VU
[13] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.RCPT.CD?locations=VU

to 2018 in LDCs. This increase was solely driven by African LDCs as the air freight of Asia-Pacific LDCs decreased over this period. Cargo transport grew by 232 per cent from 2011 to 2018 in African LDCs, while passenger transport grew by 61 per cent to 19 million (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). As a result, governments including Tanzania, Rwanda, Guinea and Uganda have launched national carriers. To date, the aviation industry in Africa has created almost 7 million jobs and $80 billion in economic activity. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) projects that Africa will become one of the fastest growing aviation regions within the next 20 years, with an average annual expansion rate of almost 5% (African Business Magazine, 2020). In Asia Pacific region, according to a study by IATA (2015) in 2014 the aviation industry created 33 million jobs and over US$ 700 billion in GDP. The IATA found that by 2035 air transport is expected to support over 70 million jobs and nearly US$1.3 trillion in GDP in the Asia Pacific region (IATA, 2015). While cargo transport decreased in the IPoA period in Asia-Pacific LDCs, which was mainly driven by the decrease in Afghanistan and Bangladesh, passenger transport increased by 88 per cent to 19 million (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). To unlock the full potential of the aviation industry, LDCs must overcome challenges of weak infrastructure and limited capacity in terms of operations

Air Transport plays a major role within the Gambia's Transport System in providing international gateways for the business community with the rest of the world and it is of critical importance for the Gambia Tourist Industry. Over the IPoA period, there has been significant growth in air traffic demand at Banjul International Airport. In 2018, a total of 53,735 passengers were handled at the airport relative to 11,284 in 2012 (World Bank, World Bank Indicators)[14]. This upward trajectory which is projected to continue for the foreseeable future was made possible by a massive 60 per cent increase in regional traffic and a 15.2 per cent rise in European/International traffic during the IPoA period. In the last quarter of 2018, Turkish Airlines started operating 3 weekly flights to Istanbul (Gambia National Report, 2019).

In Ethiopia, the aviation industry has been flourishing during the IPoA period. This industry is supporting the country to facilitate exports and imports. Air freight transport has increased from 506 to 2089 million ton-km from 2011 to 2018 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). To this end, the number of international flight destinations has been growing and reached 99 while the number of domestic airports reached 20 in 2017/18. In addition, the volume of cargo transportation, the number of planes and the number of passengers have also been increasing from 11,924 to 19,252 from 2011 to 2018, particularly in the second five years of the IPoA period starting from 13,285 in 2014 (Ethiopia National Report, 2019; UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). Ethiopian airlines was the first African airline to take delivery of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner and has modernized its fleet to the point that the average Ethiopian aircraft is 5.4 years old. In addition, it has invested in other LDCs, bringing crucial know how and expertise.

However, Ethiopia's exports of cut flowers and garments as well as tourism have been severely affected by the decline in demand as a result of COVID-19. The country lost 80 per cent of the mainly European demand for its cut flowers in the beginning of the pandemic. The government has provided support to firms, keeping workers on payroll. Ethiopian Airlines has shifted most of its operations to cargo, benefitting from the designation of Addis Ababa as a hub to distribute medical supplies across Africa and enabling the recovery of flower exports. The garment sector, which is

[14] Extracted from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IS.AIR.PSGR

often located in industrial parks, has shifted some production to personal protective equipment (PPE) for the domestic market (Banga et al, 2020).

Rehabilitation and upgrade of airport infrastructure in Zambia's four main international airports including increasing size of terminals, reconstruction of runways, development of hotels and cargo warehousing has increased the passenger and cargo handling volume, thereby enhancing the country's productive capacity. Cargo transported by air increased by over a 1000 per cent to 20,860 metric tonnes (Mt) in 2018 from 1,706 Mt in 2011. The number of passenger movements at the major airports increased by 57 per cent from 1,228,871 passengers in 2011 to 1,931,827 in 2018 (Zambia National Report, 2019).

There has also been investment in aviation infrastructure in the Asian and Pacific LDCs. With technical and capacity building assistance from Japan International Cooperation (JICA), Cambodia modernized the use of satellite routing systems at three international airports, reducing the time and costs of flights. By 2018, Cambodia had 48 airlines operating (including 9 domestic and 39 international airlines) 99,197 flights, 10, 013,118 air passengers and 73,592 cargo tonnes transported through Cambodia. This is a significant increase compared to 2014 figures of 27 airlines, 60, 935 flights, 5, 467,591 air passengers and 32,849 cargo tonnes (Cambodia National Report, 2019). During the IPoA implementation period, Tuvalu accelerated its efforts to improve aviation infrastructure with support from development partners. Considerable progress was achieved with the completion of the airport terminal and control tower, rehabilitation of the runway, and provision of air traffic control equipment and satellite communications network. As a result, in 2018 Air Kiribati commenced weekly flights between Tarawa and Funafuti (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).

Connecting Main Corridors via Road, Rail and Sea to Improve Access to Markets and to Promote Regional Integration

Transport connectivity has a direct impact on access to world markets. Investment in transport infrastructure not only creates an enabling environment for economic activities, it also supports growth, creation of jobs, raises the productive capacity of the economy, improves efficiency and boosts international competitiveness. However, assessing progress in this area during the IPoA period is challenging due to constrained data availabilities.

Despite the outlined benefits of transport connectivity, paved roads constituted only 20.9 per cent of total roads in LDCs in 2011 compared to 37.9 per cent in developing countries and 83.7 per cent in high-income countries (State of LDCs, 2016). The lack of adequate road networks has not only limited the flows of goods within the LDCs, and curtailed regional and international trade, but also made these transactions onerous, therefore impairing competitiveness. Additionally, LDCs present a marginalized group in container port traffic covering only 0.01 per cent of the world's total during the Istanbul Programme of Action period (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Because of the poor conditions of some trading routes, transport costs represent, for instance, over 70 per cent of the total import/export bills of Burundi (State of LDCs, 2014).

Inadequate physical infrastructure severely hampers growth and development in the most vulnerable countries. Many of these countries lack transport services that provide adequate and affordable connectivity within their borders and with their neighbouring countries. Transport needs are particularly acute in those LDCs that are also landlocked developing countries or small island developing countries, which face high transaction costs in regard to transportation, because of their geographical location. The poor state of rural roads continues to pose a serious handicap to transporting people and agricultural goods, therefore hampering the development of agriculture and its integration into rapidly growing agribusiness chains. Closing the infrastructure gap in all these sectors will help reduce production and trade costs, improve competitiveness and boost growth (OHRLLS, 2012). Cognizant of these challenges and in an attempt to improve inter-modal connectivity, many LDCs mounted domestic and regional initiatives to extend and upgrade road networks (State of LDCs, 2016).

During the IPoA period, many LDCs improved access to markets and promoted regional integration through enhanced connectivity, cross-border linkages and transport corridors. Increased public investment, mostly funded through multilateral and regional banks, and through South-South cooperation arrangements enabled LDCs to extend their total road mileage. Combined with some institutional reforms, this has led to some improvements in road conditions.

While infrastructure investment data is rare, investigating the industry's value added to GDP helps to overcome this challenge as it includes construction. World Bank data shows that value added industry including construction as a percentage of GDP decreased from 30.2 per cent in 2011 to 24.8 per cent in 2018 in LDCs with a slight increase from 26.1 per cent to 27.4 per cent between 2015 and 2017 (World Bank, World Development Indicators; 2020c[15]). However, as construction is only one part of the industry's sector value added, one cannot undisputedly conclude that construction's value added has decreased.

Cambodia received technical assistance from the Republic of Korea and funding from the Asian Development Bank, Government of Australia and Malaysia and OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) Fund for International Development to restore and construct its national railway. This railway has connected Cambodia to the main railway and international passenger airport terminal in Phenom Penh, Thailand (Cambodia National Report, 2019). This has expanded trade links, provided job opportunities and boosted the overall economic development of Cambodia. The Lao-China Railway is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)[16].

In 2015, the Government of Malawi constructed a new railway line connecting Moatizi mine in Mozambique with the existing railway network in Malawi (constructed in 2010) for the movement of coal to Nacala Port in Mozambique. The new railway reduced costs of imports and exports between the two countries, eased movement of goods and ensured that the countries are well connected to neighbours for ease of trade (Malawi National Report, 2019).

During the implementation period of the IPoA, Sudan completed the road linking its neighbours: Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The distribution of the new roads constructed give

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[15] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.TOTL.ZS?locations=XL

[16] Designed as a high-speed railway, the 414-km section connecting the capital city of Vientiane and Boten (at the northern border with China) could provide Lao PDR with a land link to global and regional supply chains (https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/publication/transforming-lao-pdr-from-a-land-locked-to-a-land-linked-economy)

due consideration to the regional balance where several roads were completed or near completion in Darfur, the most disadvantaged region in terms of transport linkages to the rest of the country, amounting to 1,125km. This represents 32 per cent of the total roads completed in Sudan during this period. This resulted in commodity markets becoming better integrated into the national market and reduced transportation costs. Journey times also reduced significantly. With the new road connecting El Fashir town in Darfur region to Khartoum, the journey time by bus reduced significantly from 3 days to just 10 hours and trucks are now able to complete the journey in 20 hours compared to the previous 5-6 days (Sudan National Report, 2019).

Transport and related logistical services remain the backbone of the economy in Djibouti. The Government launched a programme to increase port activity in 2012 by building two ports as well as road corridors. The expansion of the Doraleh Port is expected to quadruple revenues and significantly benefit Djibouti's economy. According to the latest World Bank WDI data, Container port traffic increased from 634 TEU (20 Foot Equivalent Units) in 2011 to 847 TEU in 2018 with a spike 987 TEU in 2016. Djibouti also constructed the 62 kilometres Tadjourah - Dorra-Balho (Ethiopia border) route and the 18 kilometres Djibouti-Loyada (Somalia border). This has helped to increase trade and contribute to strengthening the role of Djibouti as a regional logistics hub (Djibouti National Report, 2015). Much of this is intended to meet the needs of the growing Ethiopian economy.

Landlocked Ethiopia, which has a population approaching 100 million, is the primary user of Djibouti's port, and currently generates 85 per cent of the trade that moves through Djibouti's container terminal. During the IPoA implementation period in Ethiopia, about 90 per cent of the 656 km railway line project running from Sebeta (Addis Ababa) to Dewonle (Djibouti border) were constructed (Ethiopia National Report, 2015). The rehabilitation of the 752 km Djibouti-Ethiopian Railway linking the two capitals was completed in June 2014. The Ethiopia-Djibouti railway is the first electrified railway in East Africa, was put into commercial operation in 2018. The recent high growth experienced in Ethiopia has helped transform Djibouti's economy, and integrated the two economies even further (IRENA, 2015).

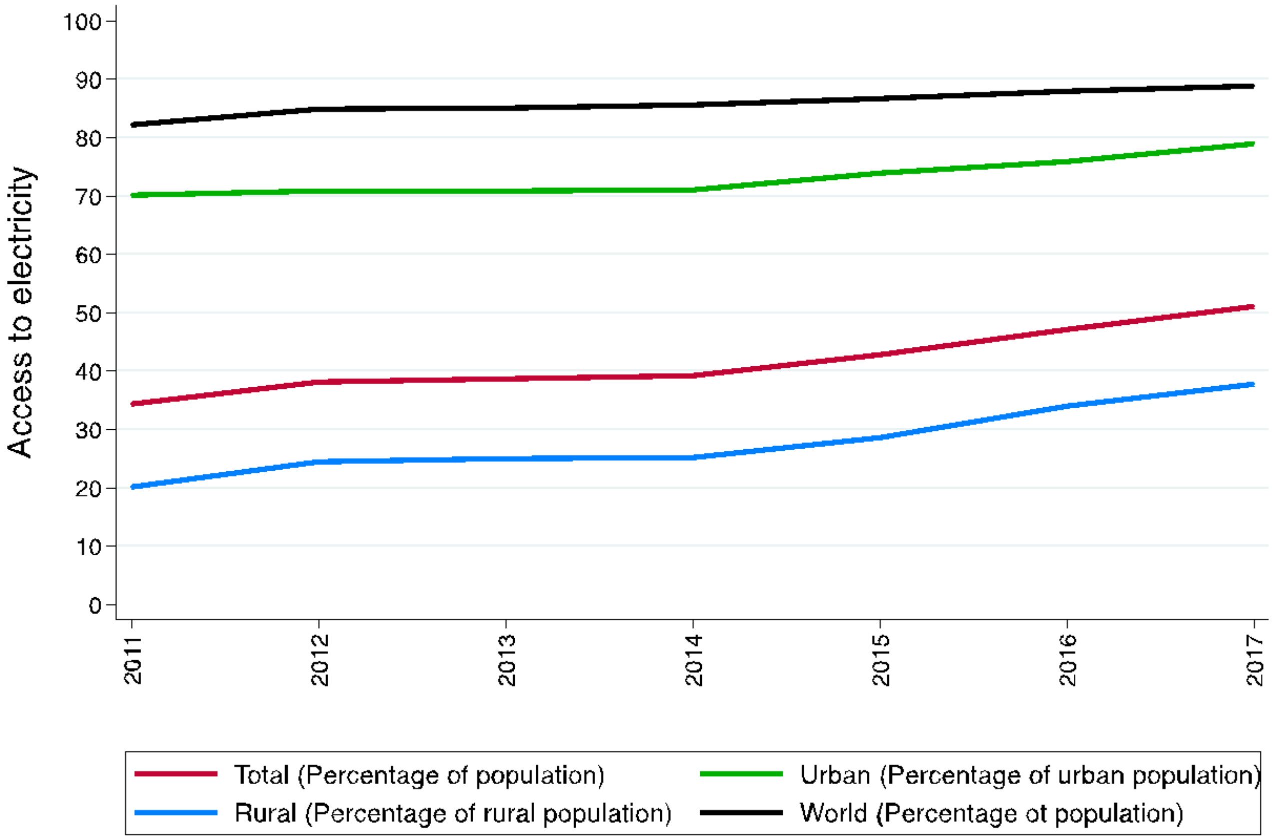
The Nairobi-Addis Ababa road corridor consists of a 504-kilometre road linking the Kenyan towns of Merille and Turbi, through Marsabit, and an additional 391-kilometre stretch running through Ethiopia linking Ageremariam, Yabelo and Mega. The African Development Bank co-funded the project to the tune of US$ 670 million, amounting to 64% of total project costs. The project was drafted in 2006 but construction started a decade later in 2016. The Kenyan section of the corridor was completed in 2016, the last part of the road in Ethiopia was finished 2019. The 895-km highway corridor linking Kenya and Ethiopia has not only eased cross-border traffic between the two countries, but is a major push for economic integration within Africa, resulting in jobs and improved livelihoods across the Horn region. The new road has boosted cross-border traffic of goods, with more than 100 vehicles per day using the corridor. Even during times of heavy rains, deliveries can still be made so fresh produce does not spoil. The corridor is also helping to reduce poverty by improving access to markets and social services for surrounding areas and communities. This has been beneficial to disadvantaged groups and has helped women achieve financial independence (AfDB, 2018a).

Lesotho is a member of the South African Development Community (SADC). To stimulate economic development and promote inter country investment opportunities with South Africa, the inter country regional corridors between the two countries were upgraded during the IPoA implementation period. South Africa enhanced the road between Bloemfontein and the Maseru Bridge; this improvement encompasses a dedicated truck lane that enhances ease of movement of persons and goods across the border. South Africa has paved the road (corridor) from Qwaqwa to Monontša Border with Lesotho in the north which will connect the Marakabei to Monontša road network. The Marakabei - Monontša road is currently under construction. These developments have substantially improved travel between the two countries, also minimizing some of the costs of transit. These upgrades provided safer, faster and all-weather roads and reduced the travel time between Botha-Bothe and Mokhotlong districts and allowed easy and improved access to Letšeng Diamond Mine and Polihali Dam. The Roma-Ramabanta-Semonkong-Sekake bitumen road reduced the travel time by half between Maseru and Qacha's Nek (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

The 120-metre Alemondji bridge was built as part of the renovation of the roads on the CU9 corridor linking Togo (Lomé & Cinkansé) to Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou). The $325 million-project was 70% financed by the African Development Fund, the concessional funding arm of the African Development Bank, and by the Fragile States Facility. Work was carried out on 150 km of road in Togo and a further 153 km in Burkina Faso. On the Togolese side, the Atakpamé-Blitta (102 km) and Blitta-Aouda (48 km) sections were renovated, 55 km of rural feeder roads were improved, and the Alemondji bridge was rebuilt. Since the road rehabilitation, there has been an increase in traffic to and from Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali transporting 2 million tonnes of goods per year since 2016. Travel times between the Burkinabe capital of Ouagadougou and the port of Lomé halved from six to three days between 2011 and 2016. Improved access to other important facilities including the Lawagnon Adult Training Institute for the Development of Fish Farming and the Order of Malta General Hospital are all now reachable across the bridge. This infrastructure ensures a flow of agricultural production and improved access to markets for inputs and products. Additionally, it stimulates the economy and facilitates the region's integration into the national and international economies. The road project has put an end to the isolation of the agricultural communities of Gbécon and Morétan and it has improved the supply of drinking water for 15 neighbouring villages. The project also renovated and extended the international market at Anié and the weekly market at Doufio in northern Togo improving women's incomes (AfDB).

Diversifying Energy Sources to Promote Renewable Energy Generation and Achieve Universal Access

Figure 2 – Access to Electricity in LDCs vs. World



Own illustration (Data from UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex))

Access to affordable, reliable and renewable energy and related technologies, as well as the efficient use and distribution of energy is critical for accelerating growth, improving livelihoods and advancing sustainable development. Overall, access to electricity in the LDCs increased significantly from 34.3 to 51.0 per cent of the total population from 2011 to 2017.

However, figure 2 reveals that LDCs are lagging far behind the average global electrification rate which reached 90 per cent in 2018. Disparities not only persist between urban and rural areas as shown in figure 2 but also between countries and regions. On average, 79.0 per cent of the urban population had access to electricity compared to only 37.8 per cent of the rural population in LDCs in 2017. Even though significant progress is observable in increasing rural electrification rates in LDCs to 37.8 per cent from only 20.1 per cent in 2011, rural populations remain underserved or unserved.

Investigating electrification rates in African and Asia-Pacific LDCs separately unveils further disparities. Rural electrification rates only increased by approximately 10 percentage points to 15.7 per cent in African LDCs, while significant improvements have been achieved in Asia-Pacific LDCs where rural access to electricity increased from 44.9 per cent in 2011 to 80.4 per cent in 2018. Several landlocked LDCs in Africa are falling behind in improving access to electricity. Overall, only 33.0 per cent of the population had access to electricity in African LDCs in 2017 with 4 African LDCs still having electrification rates below 20 per cent. Notable progress in electricity generation in the

Asia-Pacific LDCs was witnessed in the IPoA implementation period increasing overall electrification from 58.0 per cent in 2011 to 86.1 per cent in 2017.

Tuvalu has been the first LDC to attain 100 per cent universal access to electricity in 2017, closely followed by Kiribati (98.6 per cent), Afghanistan and Bhutan (97.7 per cent), Nepal (95.5 per cent) and Lao PDR (93.6 per cent) (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex) . Whilst these success stories are encouraging, the majority of LDCs are struggling to meet universal access to reliable electricity in both rural and urban areas. Weak electricity systems in most of the LDCs result in unreliable supply and frequent power outages, causing income losses to producers and additional costs associated with imported back-up generators. Attaining universal access to affordable, reliable, modern energy in the LDCs by 2030 will require major investments from a range of sources, as well as improved governance of public utilities and a special focus has to be set on remote areas in African LDCs which is lagging behind the furthest.

Financing is needed for a mix of grid, mini-grid and off-grid solutions, as well as capacity-building, addressing the needs of households and productive processes that contribute to structural transformation. For those currently without access to electricity, renewable energy is one of the best ways to provide energy to the masses. However, technical and financial capacity gaps in many LDCs remain a challenge in the implementation of scalable initiatives for renewable energy access (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

Several LDCs such as Bhutan and Bangladesh, initiated efforts by implementing Renewable Energy Policies. In 2015, 158,000,000 kWh of electricity was produced from renewable sources, excluding hydroelectric in Bangladesh (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020d)[17]. Despite the IPoA goal to "Significantly increase the share of electricity generation through renewable energy sources by 2020", across LDCs, the average share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption (TFEC) reached 70.8% in 2017, a decrease from 75.6% in 2010. This overall share of renewables is high compared to the global average because a large percentage of the population relies on traditional uses of biomass – wood fuel, and crop and animal residues – for cooking and heating. Excluding traditional uses of biomass, the share of renewables in total final energy consumption reached 11.4% in 2017, up only marginally from 11.1% in 2010 (United Nations, 2020).

In the energy sector, LDCs are not only facing challenges limited to electricity access but there is also limited access to modern fuels for cooking and heating. Consequently, the use of firewood and charcoal as a cooking fuel is prevalent, and is associated with adverse health and environmental impacts. According to the World Bank SE4ALL database, access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking has increased from 11.5 per cent of the total LDC population in 2011 to 14 per cent of the LDC population having access in 2016. This small increase was mainly driven by Asia-Pacific LDCs reporting a clean cooking rate of 23.9 per cent in 2016 up from 16.6 per cent in 2011. Access to clean cooking technologies increased only marginally by around 1 percentage point to 8.9 per cent in African LDCs from 2011 to 2016. Furthermore, 20 LDCs all situated in Africa and Haiti still reported clean cooking rates below 5 per cent (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020f)[18].

[17] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.RNWX.KH?locations=BD
[18] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.CFT.ACCS.ZS?locations=XL

Over the decade of implementation, there has been good progress with efforts to create stronger public-private partnerships, such as the Sustainable Energy for All initiative (SE4All) of the Secretary-General, which promotes partnerships among governments, business and civil society. Since the launch of the SE4All initiative, numerous activities have been carried out at the global and national levels. In 2016, a total of 39 LDCs had chosen to be "Opt-in" countries in the SE4All initiative and started to develop their national strategies for energy transition. The majority of these countries have prepared their rapid assessments and in many LDCs work is underway and/or finalised on country Action Agendas laying out the nationally tailored approaches to achieve the sustainable energy targets (State of LDCs report, 2016).

A number of the LDCs diversified their energy mix throughout the implementation of the IPoA to increase resilience and to reduce dependence on certain energy sources. Many attempted to divert from using fossil fuels to renewable sources such as solar, wind and hydro.

Diversifying To Reduce Reliance on One Renewable Energy Source

Hydropower generation constitutes 16 per cent of GDP and 30 per cent of revenue in Bhutan. As of 2017, the installed generation capacity was approximately 1,488 MW. In Bhutan, as electricity production comes overwhelmingly from hydropower, there is a need for greater diversification. To diversify sources of energy, the Royal Government adopted the Alternative Renewable Energy (ARE) Policy, which targets to generate 20 MW from various technologies by 2025. Initiatives have already commenced with the installation of a 600 kW wind power plant on a pilot basis that electrifies 300 households (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

Hydropower makes a significant contribution to Lao PDR's overall economy. The government earns revenue from taxes, royalties, and dividends from Électricité du Laos (EDL) and independent power producers (IPPs), and, more broadly, the country benefits from substantial foreign private investment. Indeed, revenues from hydropower are forecast at 1.2% of GDP in 2018, with royalties accounting for 0.8%. While hydropower development is expected to drive future economic growth in the Lao PDR, the establishment of new power exchange arrangements will be an important prerequisite to help earn export revenues and to dispatch excess capacity (Asian Development Bank. 2019).

Given its reliance on hydropower, the Zambian Government also made efforts to increase its renewable energy capacity by implementing measures to de-risk investment and promote various technologies, in addition to implementing a framework for promoting solar energy (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

During the IPoA period, demand for electricity in Zambia grew at an average annual rate of 4 per cent due to increased economic activity in agriculture, mining and manufacturing. To increase electricity generation capacity, the Government of Zambia invested ahead of the current increased demand for electricity, encouraged alternative sources of renewable energy and implemented policies to promote private power facilities. Since 2011, electricity generation has increased by 68 per cent, with improvements made in the diversification of Zambia's energy mix by including thermal coal and solar energy. These efforts led to several mini-hydro and solar projects. However, Zambia realised that public investment alone was not sufficient, and that private sector investment was necessary to meet rising demand. To increase private sector investment in electricity generation Zambia allowed entities other than the national utility to invest in electricity transmission; built mini hydro, solar, and thermal plants eligible for fiscal incentives; implemented a renewable feed-in tariff to promote private investment in renewable sectors; and removed subsidies by migrating to cost reflective tariffs to promote investment in the electricity sector. These interventions and policies led to Zambia surpassing its target for increasing electricity generation (Zambia National Report, 2019; UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

Tuvalu is one of the Pacific countries which has achieved 100 per cent electricity access since 2017, in line with SDG 7.1. Despite achieving universal access to electricity, Tuvalu is heavily reliant on imported petroleum products for transport, electricity generation and household use such as cooking and lighting. The high fuel prices and fluctuations impact heavily on businesses and households and undermine growth and food security, especially in the most isolated outer islands. To diversify its sources of energy, since 2013, Tuvalu has been able to accelerate its investment in sustainable energy as demonstrated in the rapid increase in renewable energy in the country. Tuvalu received substantial support to accelerate its effort to achieve its renewable energy target and continues to be committed to working toward this target. The World Bank provided support through the Energy Sector Development Project (ESDP) to support a reduction on imported fuel for electricity generation through investment in renewable energy development and increasing the efficiency of energy supply and use. Tuvalu's access to modern and clean cooking energy sources is approximately 54 per cent with Funafuti at approximately 85 per cent and the outer islands standing at approximately 22 per cent. Within the Tuvalu Electricity Corporation (TEC), the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Unit was established to assist with moving towards meeting its energy targets. For the period 2013-2017, the electricity sector experienced a slight growth of 0.7 percent, explained mainly by the increasing trend in renewable installation by the Tuvalu Electricity Corporation (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).

Upgrading Infrastructure to Improve Electricity Generation

The Government of Ethiopia has been investing in its power sector to make the country a power hub in the region. As a result, the national electric power generation capacity increased from 2,049 MW in 2010/11 to 4,269.5 MW in 2017/18. The length of electric power transmission lines also increased to 19,664 km in the same period. As a result, the number of cities which have access to electricity rose to 7,068 in 2017/18 while coverage of electric services grew from 45 per cent in 2010/11 to 58.6 per cent in 2017/18 (Ethiopia IPoA National Report, 2019).

Energy infrastructure has been one of the key constraints to Liberia's economic development. Liberia has one of the highest tariff rates in the world despite progress made in the energy sector. By 2030 the Government intends to increase access to electricity by 30 percent and reduce energy cost from US$0.36/kwh to US$0.25/kwh. With assistance from development partners, the Government succeeded in refurbishing and restoring its Mount Coffee Hydro-Electric Dam in 2015. As a result of this intervention, the cost of energy reduced from US$0.55/kwh in 2012 to US$0.36/kwh in 2017. Challenges remain however, the 88-megawatt capacity is still underutilized because of structural problems that continue to inhibit efficient distribution and during the dry season, the capacity of the hydro dam reduces to 20-megawatts because the water level falls (Liberia National Report, 2019).

Uganda is endowed with a diversity of energy resources spread unevenly across the country. Energy from biomass accounts for about 87 per cent of the energy consumed in the country and constitutes as the main energy resource for cooking and lighting. Uganda's energy consumption is among the lowest in the world (total primary energy consumption of 15.2 million tonnes of oil equivalent compared to 18.84 million tonnes in 2016). Uganda also has the lowest levels of electricity development. Investment in economic infrastructure has increased Uganda's generation capacity, through the commissioning of the 183MW Isimba Hydropower on 21st March 2019. The capacity increased from 601MW in FY2010/11 to 1,182MW in FY2018/19, resulting in access to electricity increasing from 11 per cent in 2010 to 24 per cent in FY2018/19. Consequently, the cost of energy reduced from USD 9 cents and USD 16 cents in FY2012/13 to USD 8 cents and USD 9.8 cents for extra large and large industries in 2018, respectively (Uganda National Report, 2019).

Increasing Renewable Energy Generation with Support from Development Partners

Despite the efforts at improving electricity generation and distribution, Sierra Leone continues to face challenges of limited access to affordable and reliable electricity supply. During the period of the IPoA, the Government of Sierra Leone continued to focus on increasing the energy capacity of the country. Special attention was given to the generation and distribution of electricity from renewable and clean sources and making it accessible to the majority of Sierra Leoneans. The Government relied heavily on development partners to achieve these goals. With support from DFID UK, the Government provided rural communities with no prior access to electricity with renewable clean energy for social, economic and environmental development. Through the project, solar systems were provided for 54 Community Health Centres across the 16 districts and 50 mini-grids were installed in 50 rural communities across Sierra Leone. The Government with the support of development partners also acquired thermal plans and developed mini hydro dams to complement Bumbuna Hydroelectric Dam to increase the supply of electricity (Sierra Leone National Report, 2019).

In 2015, just 0.08 per cent of energy produced by the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) was from renewable sources. Therefore, to increase renewable energy generation, Solomon Islands opened the market to independent Power Providers (IPP) to ensure sound technical and managerial expertise to deliver projects effectively. Financing of $30 million ($18 million loan and $12 million grant) for the Tina River Hydropower Project was requested by the Government in 2016, with the Board approval expected in the first quarter 2019. As of 2012-13, The Solar Power Development Project which cost $8.44 million, provided 44 per cent of rural households with access to lighting through Solar PV (Solomon Islands National Report, 2019). The Solar Home System (SHS) is a signature project of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources in Bangladesh. Under this programme, off-grid rural homes and communities were provided with solar renewable energy as their primary fuel, replacing environmentally hazardous kerosene and diesel. Access to solar power has improved rural livelihoods. Currently, there are 13 million users from 4.5 million household systems with an installation capacity of approximately 3MW. Additional benefits of the SHS is the solar pump that provides irrigation capacity and a solar stove and the improved public health. The SHS has successfully given off grid rural communities access to power to charge mobile phone and power services, thus contributing to sustainable development goals on energy, environment and health (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

Box 1: Women lighting up their communities: Case of Barefoot Women Solar Institute, Sierra Leone

In 2012, a group of 12 women from the Konta Line village in Sierra Leone were trained at the Barefoot College in India to become solar engineers as part of a drive to bring electricity to rural communities. In India the women learnt how to assemble circuits and construct systems. Before this initiative, these women were either illiterate or semi illiterate subsistence farmers living day to day. Now, they are proud graduates using their newly developed skills to assemble 1,500 household solar units at the first Barefoot College in Sierra Leone and train others.

The Barefoot College in Sierra Leone is the first in Africa. It enrols up to 50 students on four-month residential courses in solar engineering. The Sierra Leone Government invested about $820,000 in the project. Though the college is funded by the government, the women hope they can run it independently, in what they describe as the "Barefoot way". The solar equipment the college runs on, and the equipment for 10 villages, was provided by the Barefoot College in India, and the initial training was sponsored by the Indian government as part of its south-south cooperation programme. The advent of solar energy has saved the village about $1,000 in candles and kerosene, provided partial electrification of 33 towns/villages with a total of 2,950 PV solar systems, and solar electrification of public institutions such as police stations and places of worship. Over 100 women and youth have been trained in solar engineering. This is not the ultimate solution to Sierra Leone's electricity challenges but it has been key to encouraging rural electrification, women's empowerment and boosting entrepreneurial spirit (Ministry of Energy, Sierra Leone, 2016; Sierra Leone National Report 2019).

The Government of Burkina Faso commissioned the Zagtouli (33.7 MWp) and Ziga (1.1 MWp) solar power plants and the creation of the National Agency for Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency (ANEREE). As a result, the share of renewable energies in national electricity production increased from 15.5 per cent in 2011 to 16.9 per cent in 2018. Implementation of the National Bio Digesters Program (PNB-BF), promoted the number of bio-digesters from just one in 2009 to 4,013 in 2014 helping to improve quality of life of more than 24,500 Burkinabè. Burkina Faso made progress through the following projects: the construction of mini photovoltaic solar power plants with storage for 14 Medical Centres; provision of electrification to educational and healthcare institutions in 300 rural localities with installation of 300 solar pumps and 3000 solar street lights in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019).

Access to electricity remains an ongoing challenge for The Gambia. In 2016, about half of the population (approximately 1 million people) did not have access to electricity. Even where grid connections existed, power supply was often unreliable, with firms reporting an average of about 20 power outages per month. Renewable energy constitutes only 1% of the total share of electricity generation in the Gambia. With support from the ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), the Government outlined its commitments and initiatives to develop renewable energy and meet its electrification targets in its National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP).

The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy estimates a current installed capacity of approximately 2 MW from the off-grid sector, including several off-grid pilot projects that have been developed with

World Bank support. Off-grid solar PV systems have been used for telecommunications, lighting, and water pumps in rural areas in the country. There are also a few resort hotels that feature solar-powered micro-grid systems. To date, the country's rural electrification initiatives have mainly focused on grid-connected power.

However, off-grid electrification programs and initiatives have started to gain momentum in recent years. For example, in 2019, the European Investment Bank (EIB), World Bank and European Union (EU) combined to provide EUR 142 million to support development of a 20-MW solar PV plant and new transmission and distribution infrastructure to electrify 1,100 rural schools and health centres in the country. The country is also receiving support from a number of foundations and non-profit organizations that distribute SHS and PV systems to electrify off-grid health clinics, schools, and women's centres (Gambia National Report, 2019). The Government of Sudan launched the Renewable Energy Feed-in Tariff (REFiT) Strategy in 2017. The REFiT is a Government power sector initiative aimed at accelerating private investments in small-and-medium sized renewable energy projects. The initiative was successful, doubling power generation capacity, from 8,455 GWH in 2011 to 17,064 GWH in 2018 with 4,190 MW of electricity added to the national grid through hydro and geothermal power (Sudan National Report, 2019).

Djibouti is endowed with ample energy resources, considered sufficient for the size of its population and the scale of its economic activities. The country has significant geothermal energy resources for generating electricity, estimated at 300-500 megawatt (MW) capacity. It also has some excellent wind energy sites as well as good solar energy resources. However, the country continues to struggle to meet resource constraints due to its dependence on imported fuel and weak supply infrastructure. This is especially pronounced in rural areas where levels of access to adequate and reliable energy services are limited due to low incomes, low demand and greater distance from grid lines. During the IPoA period, the Government made efforts to diversify its energy mix and promote renewable energy. With support from the Japanese Government, a 300 kilowatt-peak (kWp) grid-connected PV plant was installed in 2012, costing an estimated JPN 610 million or 1 billion Djibouti Francs. The solar park occupies an area of 5200 m² and consists of 1 440 PV panels. The plant was built to meet the needs of the Centre for Studies and Scientific Research of Djibouti with surplus power fed into the national network. The project was greatly successful. During the first year of operation, the plant produced 508 MWh of electricity. This was 10 per cent more than initially planned (IRENA, 2015).

Access to electricity is not the only energy challenge for LDCs. There is also limited access to modern fuels for cooking and heating, which increases the reliance on firewood and charcoal as a cooking fuel, leading to adverse health and environmental impacts (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). To mitigate this challenge and provide an alternative some of the LDCs (Malawi, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Mali and Sierra Leone) adopted clean cooking alternatives as highlighted in the case study box below.

Box 1.2: Ensuring 2 Million Energy-Efficient Stoves are Installed in Malawian Homes by 2020.

As part of Energising Development (EnDev), the Government of Malawi set up the project to promote a financially sustainable market for improved cooking stoves in urban and peri-urban areas with the development and distribution of the 'Chitetezo Mbaula' stove. On the demand-side activities the Government is focused on generating greater consumer interest in the cookstoves. While on the supply side, EnDev Malawi provides training and skills for the craftsmen who produce the stove. A local non-governmental organisation, MAEVE, connects production to demand by liaising between the small-scale stove producers and large urban sales outlets such as supermarkets and filling stations. By June 2014, nearly 47,000 people had gained access to improved forms of energy for cooking, as a result of the project. The number of stoves manufactured by 21 producer groups and subsequently sold through sales channels introduced by EnDev has risen to 8,000. In the first half of 2014 alone, the stove-making business created jobs for nearly 200 women and 60 men. Under the results based financing approach with the national social cash transfer (SCT) programme. Over a four-year period 82,000 SCT programme beneficiaries – which represent the poorest population in the country are set to receive locally produced Chitetezo Mbaula stove for free (GIZ, 2015).

Providing Universal Access to Mobile, Broadband and Telecommunication Services

ICT offers significant benefits for the LDCs, as a transformational tool to help overcome their vulnerabilities, grow their economies and enhance the livelihoods of their citizens. The progress achieved in key ICT fields during the IPoA implementation period varies substantially along different indicators. While the rapid increase of mobile cellular subscriptions is one of the success stories of LDCs in the last decade, internet access in LDCs are still lagging far behind.

Between 2011 and 2017, the rates of mobile cellular subscriptions increased from 42 per 100 people to almost 70 per 100 people. In 2017, mobile cellular subscription rates for several countries (Cambodia, Gambia, Lesotho, Mali, Nepal, Senegal and Timor-Leste) were about 100 per cent or more, highlighting the success achieved in connecting both urban and rural areas (UNOHRLLS, 2018a).

According to the National Report, Sudan made impressive strides in liberalizing its ICT markets to become one of the most liberalized markets in Africa during the IPoA period. The number of Internet users reached 10.2 million in 2016, with 31 per cent of the population as internet users putting Sudan at a much higher rate compared to all its neighbours (except Egypt). The number of mobile phone subscribers increased from 18.3 million in 2010 to 28.7 million in 2017 and mobile phone coverage reached between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the country. Sudan is slightly higher in terms of mobile subscription per 100 people compared to other LDCs (Sudan National Report, 2019).

The IPoA calls for LDCs to "significantly increase access to telecommunication services and strive to provide 100 per cent access to the Internet by 2020" (United Nations, 2011). While 87 per cent of individuals in developed countries used the Internet in 2019, Internet access and use in the LDCs stood at just 19 per cent. However, Internet usage has significantly increased in LDCs from only 5.5 per cent in 2010 (ITU and UNESCO, 2020). It is estimated that of the approximately 800 million people in the LDCs who are not online, the five most populated countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, DRC, Tanzania and Myanmar) account for almost half that number (ITU, 2018).

Rapid improvement in high-speed Internet use in the LDCs can lead to the increased utilization of some of the most promising broadband applications for education, health and e-commerce.

However, most LDCs face great challenges in making broadband Internet access available and affordable for all. Demand for and productive use of broadband in LDCs has not matched the growing supply. This is linked to the weak digital literacy, unaffordability of smartphones, lack of relevant local content and applications, patchy mobile broadband coverage and limited capacity among policy makers to apply broadband across different sectors of economy (Broadband Commission & UNOHRLLS, 2018). Bridging the digital divide is even more important during the novel COVID-19 pandemic as those who are not connected are deprived from promising broadband applications, e.g. for e-health, e-education and e-commerce.

Box 1.3: Digital Literacy for the Masses in Rwanda

Data from Rwanda illustrate how supply- and demand-side factors can be combined to identify constraints in Internet use. By early 2017, 92 per cent of the population was covered by the latest 3G mobile broadband technologies, so access is not a significant barrier. In terms of affordability, Rwanda boasts the eighth cheapest mobile Internet among LDCs, at US$ 2.54 for 500 MB per month according to the ITU basket. Although absolute prices are extremely low, incomes in the country are also low. Assuming that people would only be willing to pay less than 5 per cent per month of their total consumption expenditure for Internet access, Internet would be affordable for only 32 per cent of Rwandan households.

In 2014, however, take-up of the Internet (including through mobile phones) among Rwandan households was only 9 per cent, or 23 percentage points lower than for households that could actually afford it, and Internet penetration in the country remains low. This is closely tied to the computer literacy rate in the country, which in 2014 was 8.4 per cent of the population aged 15 years and older. The Government of Rwanda recognizes that lack of digital literacy is a major obstacle to its aspiration to become a "Smart Nation". In early 2017, it launched the Digital Ambassador Program (DAP), which will train 5 000 young people and post them to all the country's 30 districts in order to provide digital skills training for 5 million Rwandans over a four-year period. The DAP is a partnership between the Ministry of ICT, the Canadian NGO Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) and the World Economic Forum's Internet for All initiative. DAP would require each trainer to teach 250 people a year, which seems realistic in the light of current experience. If successful, it will dramatically boost Rwanda's digital literacy to 85 per cent of the population and give Internet penetration in the country a strong boost.

Source: UNOHRLLS and ITU (2018)

Infrastructural challenges such as electricity have been a constraint for broadband though the countries have found ways to adapt. Limited affordability, along with other factors such as inadequate awareness, skills and local content are important barriers to take-up and Internet usage. The inability to use the Internet is also a major obstacle in LDCs. According to ITU and UNESCO (2020), only about 20 per cent of the LDCs population in LDCs have the basic skills for computer-based activities, including sending e-mails with attachments, moving files, using copy and paste, and transferring files between devices.

Despite the increase in broadband infrastructure and a growing number of mobile Internet users with smartphones, the computer software and information services sector is underdeveloped in LDCs (Broadband Commission & UNOHRLLS, 2018). Investigating science, technology and innovation in LDCs further proves challenging due to data scarcity. Residents and non-residents of LDCs filed 1,567 patents in 2018, up from 875 in 2011. However, as a share of the world's total, the number is almost zero. Only 9 journal articles were published per 1 million people in 2016, compared with 6 in 2011 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

New developments, especially, the roll-out of national fibre optic cable backbones and the emergence of mobile broadband services, offer real opportunities to reduce prices and boost Internet usage. Unlocking these potentials depends on improving the regulatory framework for ICT markets, and continued investment in ICT infrastructure and its maintenance. These interventions should be coupled with efforts to expand resources and capacities needed to fully harness ICT, including access to reliable energy, literacy and technical skills. These improvements are also challenges to the majority of LDCs. Vanuatu, Senegal and Rwanda have leveraged broadband to develop their own fibre optic government backbones, with Cambodia, leasing fibre lines from operators (Broadband Commission & UNOHRLLS, 2018).

In 2012, Sao Tome and Principe connected to the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) undersea fibre-optic cable. Since then, the use of international Internet bandwidth has increased over 15-fold. Internet use has grown by 67 per cent and 90 per cent of the population is covered. Another significant event was the launch of competition in 2015, which had a significant impact on prices. The price of a monthly 500 MB prepaid mobile broadband basket in 2015 was 3.3 per cent of average per capita income. The launch of the competitor provider had positive impacts on young people and secondary school enrolment. In 2014, the internet became popular with young people aged 15 – 24 years, with usage of 38 per cent. It has promoted a high level of internet connectivity in schools and some of the funds received from the second operator's licence are being used to provide tablets for secondary students. There is however still the challenge of the gender gap that must be addressed. In 2014, 32 per cent of young women aged 15-24 were online, compared to 43 per cent of young men in that age group (UNOHRLLS and ITU, 2018).

Senegal and Uganda have also invested in fibre-optic cables as a strategy to leave no one behind in accessing the internet. Uganda increased the total optical fibre network, both government and private owned spanned to 12,000km covering 49 per cent of the districts and 24 per cent of the sub counties by the end of FY 2016/17. By the end of FY2016/17, 40 per cent of communities indicated that internet access points were available in their area. As a result, the number of internet users increased from 13 million in 2015 to 18.8 million in 2017, with a penetration rate of 45.4 per cent (Uganda National Report, 2019).

In terms of telecommunications infrastructure, in 2018, Senegal had more than 11,000 km of optical fibre throughout the national territory, against 10,972 km in 2017 and a significant increase from 2,300 km in 2013 its inaugural year of deployment (Senegal National Report, 2019). Fibre optic cables promote bilateral, subregional and regional approaches to improve connectivity by removing infrastructure bottlenecks. Lesotho signed up to the East and Southern African Optic Submarine Cable System project, which will provide access to broadband infrastructure that allows cost competitive, high speed downloads and uploads of digital content (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

The Zambian Government has identified Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a catalyst for socio-economic development as it promotes competitiveness as well as being an enabler of good governance in the country. To increase Global System for Mobile (GSM) coverage in un-served and underserved areas, the Government constructed a total of 204 mobile communication towers across the country from 2012 -2015. At the end of 2018, telecommunication coverage countrywide stood at 88 per cent of the population. By mid-2019, the total number of telecommunication towers installed across the country stood at 667. By mid-2019 there were 2,820 telecommunications tower infrastructures countrywide owned by both private and public companies, including the universal access towers. By 2019, Zambia had deployed over 7,000 km of backbone optic fibre cables countrywide. The installation of the additional mobile communication towers has contributed to raising the mobile cellular subscriber base by 89 per cent, from 8,164,553 in 2011 to 15,470,270 in 2018 and has significantly reduced the digital divide between the rural and urban population. The economy has also seen improvement in financial inclusion as a result of improvement of mobile connectivity, particularly for previously un-served areas. This is demonstrated in the volume of mobile money transactions, which increased from 17 million in 2012 to 304 million transactions in 2018 representing a 17-fold increase. The monetary value of mobile money transactions rose to US$ 1,857 million in 2018 from US$ 225 million in 2012, an 8-fold increase (Zambia National Report, 2019).

Internet users in LDCs predominantly use mobile networks and, increasingly, 3G and 4G mobile broadband. By 2016, all LDCs had launched 3G mobile broadband networks. This has been accompanied by a rise in mobile broadband coverage from less than ten per cent of the population in 2010 to over half in 2016 (Figure 2.4, right). Six LDCs have mobile broadband coverage of over 90 per cent of the population (Bangladesh, Lesotho, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda and Timor-Leste), UNOHRLLS and ITU (2018).

Box 1.4: Leveraging investment in Broadband Internet in Cambodia

Cambodia has one of the more competitive mobile Internet markets among LDCs, with six active operators. It was also one of the first LDCs to launch mobile broadband when 3G networks were launched in 2007. Its proximity to China has resulted in the availability of inexpensive Chinese handsets. These factors have combined to make Cambodia the LDC with the lowest prepaid mobile broadband prices, just one US dollar a month for a 500 MB package.

At the same time, there has been continuous research to adapt devices to the Khmer script, increasing acceptance among users. Literacy is high at 77 per cent, compared to the LDC average of 63 per cent. In 2009, an agreement was reached between the Ministry of Education and one of the country's telecom operators to provide Internet access in all schools with electricity, which was accomplished in 2011. The agreement was renewed in 2015, providing free broadband access to around 1 million students and teachers for five years as part of the operator's corporate social responsibility initiatives. According to one survey, by 2016, 37 per cent of the population used the Internet, close to the developing country average.

UNOHRLLS and ITU (2018).

Implementing Various Reforms To Improve The Business Environment and Encourage Private Sector Investment

The private sector is a critical stakeholder and partner in economic development, as a provider of income, jobs, goods, and services to enhance people's lives and help countries escape poverty. Multilateral development banks and bilateral development finance institutions play a significant role in supporting the private sector in developing countries (IFC, 2011). For LDCs, investing in a vibrant private sector can help to ensure better standards of living, employment opportunities, and foster economic development. At the governance level, there is a strong emphasis on developing robust commercial, financial, and physical infrastructure as incentives business and start-ups. A strong private sector can work to stifle corruption and reduce red tape and cronyism within government, which have shown to destroy the socio-economic fabric of a society (IFC, 2011).

To support private business's contribution to economic development and employment, public policy needs to set the enabling environment to encourage entrepreneurship and investment. Many developing countries have embarked on numerous reforms to make it easier for companies to do business (Financing for Sustainable Development, 2019). In 2018, 162,763 new businesses were registered across 31 of the LDCs. 6 LDCs registered over ten thousand business in 2018 alone. Ethiopia registered 31,198 in 2018 up from 10, 693 in 2016, followed by Nepal 24, 088 in 2018 up from 10,000 in 2011. Uganda registered 18, 862 in 2018 up from 14, 661 in 2011. Myanmar registered 14, 051 in 2018 up from 1,944 in 2011. Rwanda registered 10,635 in 2018 up from 6,030 in 2011 and Zambia registered 10,236 in 2018 up from 7,772 in 2011 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020g)[19].

LDCs face a number of challenges when pursuing private sector development including the missing middle of the enterprise structure, meaning that LDCs have a large number of small firms and very few large firms which reduces inter-firm linkages, hampering opportunities for innovation, learning and skills development and thus productivity growth. LDCs also face high transport and transaction costs and obstacles to trade which further restrict the competitiveness of LDCs. Low productivity and the large size of the informal sector are also challenges for many LDCs (State of LDCs, 2016).

To overcome such challenges, Zambia has implemented several reforms aimed at improving its business environment and attracting both domestic and foreign direct investment. During the period of the IPoA, concerted efforts were targeted at improving the regulatory and institutional framework, competitive environment and facilitating the ease of doing business. In line with these targets, the Government set up various online services including business registration related services, tax administration, electronic visa issuance, electronic patent registration and an electronic registry or licensing portal for easy, one-stop-shop access to exhaustive information about licensing requirements for business activities. By implementing the Private Sector Development Reform Programme, substantial progress was made in streamlining administrative requirements and modernising systems. This reform was successful in eliminating 114 unnecessary business licenses, reclassifying 43 licences as levies, amalgamating 31 licenses into one license and collapsing 38 municipal licenses into a single business levy. These services and reforms reduced the time and cost taken to register a business in Zambia (Zambia National Report 2019).

The Guinean Government has worked hard to improve the business climate and key economic governance indicators. The process to incorporate a business has been simplified, it now takes just 72 hours to set up a company and 29 days to grant building permits. Taxes on property transfers and notary fees have also been reduced. The Private Investment Promotion Agency (APIP) was restructured to house a Single Window for investors providing a one stop shop, with the mining sector having its own Single Window. To improve governance, the IMF provided authorities with technical assistance to modernize the tax system, strengthen national statistical capacities and reform the foreign exchange market, central bank liquidity management and access to credit for the private sector (Investing Guinea, 2019).

[19] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IC.BUS.NREG?locations=ET-NP-UG-MM-RW-ZM

The Government of Bangladesh put in place 3 key reforms which led to the significant progress in in improving the business environment. The first reform was the reduction of registration and name clearance fees and removal of the certifying fee for digital certificates, which made setting up a new business less expensive. The second reform made obtaining an electrical connection in Dhaka more efficient as the city invested in digitization and human capital. Simultaneously, the country reduced the amount of security deposit required for a new connection. The third and most significant reform expanded coverage by the credit information bureau improving access to credit information (World Bank, 2019). During the IPoA period, Bangladesh also enacted “The Bangladesh Economic Zone Act” and “Hi-Tech Park Act of 2010” which led to the creation of two semi-autonomous agencies– Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) and the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). With overlapping mandates, these two authorities are tasked with overseeing the expansion of special economic zones and hi-tech parks respectively. The Government has already approved 88 economic zones, of which 61 are from the public sector and 27 from the private sector. Currently, 56 projects in 13 sectors worth US$23.8 billion have been approved. In order to encourage private investment in infrastructure sectors, the Government is planning to provide financial incentives to private enterprises. A non-banking financial institution titled 'Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund Limited' has been established especially for the private sector (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

During the IPoA period, quantitative indicators showed that Nepal had been lagging in terms of private sector development. The low level of private sector development has been considered as both a cause and an outcome of the country's low level of economic development. To improve the country’s status the Government of Nepal enacted a new Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA) and amended the Special Economic Zone Act (SEZA) with aim of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the growth drivers and export potential sectors. In addition, policy and administrative reforms on entry, registration and operation of businesses, specifically improving the process to obtain construction permits, credit, and contracts and trade across borders improved the ease of doing business in Nepal (Nepal National Report, 2019)

The Government of Lesotho implemented on-going economic reforms including automation of the registration processes, streamlining the process of obtaining construction permits and improving credit score ratings. A One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre and the Credit Bureau, which covers 7.5 per cent of the adult population were established. The reforms have resulted in an improved environment for doing business in Lesotho (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

Following the enactment of the Investment and Export Promotion Act in 2012, the Government of Malawi established a One-Stop Service Centre (OSSC) within the Malawi Investment and Trade Centre (MITC) in 2013. Following its establishment, the OSSC eased access to a number of services including: investment registration, investment incentives, business registration, immigration permits, and accessing land. With many of the critical offices in one centre the cost of doing business in Malawi has reduced (WB Doing Business, 2020).

The IPoA period was marked by an influx of private sector investment in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). To improve business climate, promote efficient investment and attract foreign investors, a legal and regulatory framework on the Public-Private Partnership was established. This law is concerned with the mobilization of significant funds to support the execution of the vast programs of reconstruction and development intended to provide the country with basic infrastructure for improving the social well-being of the population. The Government also established a legal and regulatory framework on Special Economic Zones to promote investment in accordance with the Constitution, accelerated the implementation of new laws (mining code, forestry code, code investment, labour code) and promoted financial inclusion to facilitate access to financial services and increase savings. With the acceleration of reforms in the business climate, there has been progress in business creation, license building, electricity connection, access to credit, cross-border trade and payment of taxes with a reduction from 40 to 35 per cent of the tax rate on profits and corporate profits as well as the simplification of the tax declaration and payment procedure (DRC National Report, 2019).

Over the past decade, the Government of Mauritania developed and implemented a roadmap to create the right conditions to promote private sector development and improve the business environment. Mauritania was constrained by a number of factors including limited access to finance; expensive and unreliable energy supply, inadequate skills and insufficient access to ICT. To improve the business environment in Mauritania and to increase private sector development, the Government simplified procedures for setting up businesses, reduction of costs and delays as well as the implementation of the single payment at the Single Window; re-engineered of the business creation process, including the implementation of the necessary improvements in the Single Window space and created a dynamic site and configurable web dedicated to the Single Window. As a result, the first PPP was launched in 2018 and three PPPs were scheduled for 2019 on a portfolio of 10 eligible projects with construction in motion of a container terminal and an oil pier (Mauritania National Report, 2019).

The Government of Lao PDR has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda to enable the private sector, in particular SMEs and MSMEs, and to improve the overall business environment in country. During the IPoA implementation period, one critical aspect among others was that the Prime Minister issued a series of orders to improve the business environment, demonstrating a high-level commitment to reform. PM Order No. 2 was issued in February 2018, to improve the country's investment climate. This was followed by PM Order No. 3 in January 2020, which broadens business environment reform by streamlining operating license procedures. A number of development partners and technical agencies are currently supporting the Government of Lao PDR to further strengthen and improve the overall business environment and to reap the benefits from regional economic integration, in particular with ASEAN neighbours[20].

2.2 AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

With two thirds of the population in LDCs living in rural areas in 2018, agriculture plays a crucial role in almost all LDCs, both in promoting food security and as the major economic activity for much of the population, with direct linkages to the eradication of poverty and hunger and rural development as well as exports, commodity and production diversification and agro-processing capacity.

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20 https://ifcext.ifc.org/IFCExt/Pressroom/IFCPressRoom.nsf/0/6223AF059FBCA40E852582660026E85B?OpenDocument and https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/brief/doing-business-in-lao-pdr

During the implementation of the IPoA, the LDCs reduced the prevalence rate of the undernourished population from 21.2 per cent in 2011 to 19.4 per cent in 2018 (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020h)[21]. The highest proportion of undernourished people were in the African LDCs, with countries in Asia and Pacific recording relatively modest rates of undernourishment. This realisation was mainly due to varying productivity, population dynamics and level of exposure and capacity to deal with shocks. The Asian LDCs managed to increase crop yields while African LDCs maintained low productivity in this sector due to some extent low capitalization of the sector. Even with progress, greater efforts are needed in both regions towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2, which calls for ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture, if it is to be achieved by 2030.

The value added share of agriculture, forestry and fishing as a percentage of GDP amongst the LDCs remained roughly constant around 21 per cent from 2011 to 2017. African LDCs share increased from 21.0 per cent to 24.2 per cent in 2011 and 2017 respectively, while the Asian and Pacific LDCs share declined from 21.4 per cent in 2011 to 16.2 per cent in 2017. Agriculture covers the majority of total employment with a share of 56.6 per cent in 2018. Value added per worker increased from 2011 to 2018 by 12 per cent to 860.4 expressed in constant 2010 dollars (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

Over the decade of implementation, a number of factors hindered the LDCs from developing their agricultural sectors such as poor roads, insecure property rights and in some cases, tariffs on farm goods. To overcome these and other challenges the LDCs improved access to inputs and innovations, including agricultural extension services. LDCs reported an increase of fertilizer consumption between 2011 and 2016 from 24.6kg per ha of arable land to 27.2 kg, nonetheless the fertilizer consumption is still below the average of other developing countries (UNOHRLLS, 2020). The countries with the highest use of fertilizer per hectare of arable land in 2014 include Bangladesh (279 kg), Nepal (67 kg), Zambia (46 kg) and Malawi (36.5 kg).

During the last decade, the LDCs continued to be hit by disastrous natural hazards, including cyclones, hurricanes, landslides, flooding, earthquakes and drought. Climate-related disasters increased both in terms of damage and losses over time (UNOHRLLS, 2020). In 2016 alone, countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen were affected by El Niño and other climate-related shocks, while many also suffered the negative impacts of crises and conflict (United Nations, 2018b). To address the potentially negative effects of climate change on agricultural production, including severe droughts and flooding and more irregular weather patterns, priority was given to building agricultural resilience through climate smart agricultural initiatives.

COVID-19 might lead to a food security crisis due to disruption in supply chains (transport), which could increase the number of people living in hunger significantly reversing some of the achievements of the IPoA decade. For example, the World Food Programme estimates an additional 130 million people facing hunger by the end of 2020, which represents a doubling of acute hunger by the end of 2020[22].

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[21] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SN.ITK.DEFC.ZS?locations=XL

[22] https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-chief-warns-hunger-pandemic-covid-19-spreads-statement-un-security-council?_ga=2.118879499.329637304.1590567320-809535898.1590567320

Adopting Climate Smart Agricultural Initiatives to Build Resilience and Safeguard Livelihoods

LDCs are highly dependent on climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture, both as a major source of employment and as a significant contributor to GDP (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). As a consequence, LDCs are some of the most vulnerable to climate change, as they are least able to recover from climate stresses (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). For this reason, it is imperative for LDCs to build resilience in agriculture and food security (LDC Climate, 2019).

Seven LDCs (Ethiopia, The Gambia, Nepal, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Sudan, Tanzania) are supporting farmers with the inputs, services, technologies and farming practices required to build resilience. In Niger and Ethiopia, initiatives to improve soil fertility and agricultural productivity have been implemented. Some LDCs have integrated climate-resilient agriculture practices into government planning such as Nepal, Uganda and Zambia. In order to access climate information to maximise yields and better cope with climate variability and shocks, Uganda uses technology for climate-resilient agriculture and farmers in Mozambique use improved meteorological services (LDC Climate, 2019).

To assist the vulnerable people in the cattle corridor cope with droughts and safeguard livelihoods, the Government of Uganda partnered with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). With additional support from Ugandan universities, meteorological services and an international consultancy a climate information system was developed under the CHAI Project. This ongoing project began in 2012 and is due to finish in 2021. It provides climate information to 250,000 farmers in three districts via radio broadcasts, text messages and emails. This information includes seasonal weather forecasts from 22 sub county weather stations, decentralised agricultural advisory information, livestock and agriculture market information from 46 local outlets, rainwater harvesting techniques, drought and flood coping mechanisms and pest control methods. Households in targeted districts were 50 per cent more likely to have access to climate information than those in non-targeted districts, which helped reduce crop loss by 40–65 per cent and made households less sensitive to the impacts of drought (LDC Climate, 2019; fhi360, n.d.). The CHAI Project won the prestigious UNFCCC Momentum for Change award as one of the 16 global game-changing climate action initiatives and was honoured at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015 (fhi360, n.d.).

Since 2015, Bangladesh has been developing various stress-tolerant crops. The Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) along with Bangladesh's Government, released and patented different varieties of stress-tolerant paddies tailored to the environment in different regions, including drought resistant varieties and some that are able to resist saline and submergence situations simultaneously. In combination with enhanced rice-based farming systems, and improving crop cultivation practices, Bangladesh raised its level of rice production and minimized the intensity of food insecurity during major floods and monsoons. In 2013, Bangladesh released a GM variety of eggplant that is insect resistant, which has allowed the reduction of insecticides use by 80–90 per cent (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). Bangladesh has also been researching and developing genome sequencing and GMO technology to produce 49 varieties of jute and other fibre crops. In the Southern part of the country, vegetables are being produced by the floating agriculture method to tackle adverse effects of climate change. In 2015, the FAO recognized floating agriculture practices in Bangladesh as a Global Heritage Site (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

Bhutan is challenged by many factors limiting its agricultural productivity such as labour shortages, inadequate irrigation water, seasonal drought, hail and wind storms, landslides, limited arable land and access to markets. The impact of climate change exacerbates these challenges. To mitigate and ensure Bhutan's agriculture production system is sustainable and resilient to the changing climate, the National Irrigation Master Plan, a 15-year action plan was developed in 2016, resulting in approximately 2,640km of irrigation channels constructed or renovated and land brought under assured irrigation increased from 47,424 acres in 2010 to 68,955 acres in 2017. The Royal Government has been pursuing various climate-smart agriculture options such as the launch of the Agriculture Land Development Guidelines (ALDG) in 2017. These guidelines set out the importance of sustainable land management for enhanced food production, and for Bhutan to remain committed to the carbon neutrality targets of the UNCCD (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

According to the 2017 Climate Risk Index, Mozambique is the 4th most exposed and impacted African LDC to climate hazards and risk. In 2019 alone, Mozambique was hit with back to back cyclones. Cyclone Kenneth hit in May 2019, damaging nearly 55,000 ha of crops (OCHA, 2019) and Cyclone Idai in September 2019 destroyed more than 1.72 million acres of crops in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe (CARE, 2019). One particularly urgent issue for Mozambique is that it is the only country in Africa at high risk of every one of the principal negative impacts of global warming: drought, flooding and coastal cyclones (AfDB, 2018c). These hazards have cost the country an average of 1.1 per cent of GDP and have produced devastating repercussions for farmers – with 3 out of 4 Mozambican farmers losing harvests or livestock every year from 2000 to 2013. Providing climate resilient infrastructure is a necessity in Mozambique (AfDB, 2018c).

To address the challenges, in 2013, the Government launched the Baixo Limpopo Climate Resilience Pilot Project (BLCRPP). The project sought to improve the productivity of the country's farmers by providing access to water year-round, while also helping them to mitigate and adapt to adverse climate change impacts. Since implementation, the BLCRPP has been training farmers directly in climate-smart agricultural practices, how to maintain optimal water levels for crops year-round, and the effective use of fertilisers – as well as post-harvest practices – including cleaning, sorting and drying of produce and the construction of a cold-storage and agro-processing facility. In Gaza province, around 8,000 farmers gained access to irrigation and improved drainage through the project. Just over 1,000 ha of land in the Magula East region of Gaza province has been equipped with irrigation pipelines. As a result, farmers in the area have seen production levels increase by up to 75 per cent. The upgraded road surface gives farmers better access to larger urban markets, while also improving accessibility in the event of floods or other emergencies. Better drainage along the roads, has helped to reduce soil erosion previously caused by surface runoff. 5,000 local farmers also received training in the maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure. By 2016, 3 years into the project's implementation, Mozambique produced around 800,000 tonnes of vegetables, increasing from 550,000 tonnes in 2012. The African Development Bank's climate-smart resilience financing is helping to lift Mozambicans out of poverty, and dramatically improve livelihoods (AfDB, 2018c).

Promoting Agribusiness Amongst the Youth and Women to Empower and Encourage Income Generation Opportunities

To encourage entrepreneurship and reduce unemployment, the Royal Government of Bhutan supported youth to enter the in agricultural sector as farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. To date, 1,800 youth have taken up farming in their communities and through the Land Use Rights system, 52 youth are currently cultivating 60 acres of land (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

Over the IPoA period, the Government of Ethiopia provided training to women and youth in various areas such as agriculture and micro and small businesses. In 2017/18, around 4,324,453 women in micro and small enterprises, and 7,183,443 women in cooperatives benefited. Approximately 2,714,004 women participated and benefited from agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In addition, women received land ownership certificates and were trained on various income generating activities (Ethiopia IPoA National Report, 2019).

According to the National Report, the Government of Bangladesh believes women have ample scope to contribute in agricultural growth, and, should be engaged more in agricultural related income generation and human development activities. In a bid to pursue these notions, the National Agriculture Policy 2018 has given due emphasis on women‘s empowerment, participation in production, marketing, and creating business opportunities. Under the Policy, the Department of Agriculture Marketing trained 51,651 farmers on marketing management, post-harvest management, supply chain, value chain development, and entrepreneurship development in the past three years. Among the beneficiaries, 15,495 farmers were women (approximately 30 per cent). In total, 23,466 woman entrepreneurs have been supported by the Department of Agriculture through various projects and programs (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

To ensure an increased number of youth and women engaged in farming and agribusiness, a collaborative project Promoting Decent Rural Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Agribusiness was implemented in Malawi. Through the project, 103 rural youths were trained in agribusiness. The youths were also involved in the implementation of agricultural clusters, farmer field schools, farmer business schools' approaches and integrated homestead farming. The Government also initiated the Agricultural Infrastructure and Youth in Agribusiness Project (AIYAP) with the aim of building the capacity of the youths in value addition and entrepreneurship skills. A total of 148 youth "agripreneurs" were trained in horticulture, livestock farming, green house farming, and marketing skills. The project has a target of reaching 5,000 youth in farming and agribusiness with at least 50% being female by 2022 (Malawi National Report, 2019).

The Support Project for Youth Employability and Integration in Growth Sectors (PAEIJ-SP) was initiated by the Togolese Ministry of Development at the Base, Handicrafts, Youth and Youth Employment (MDBAJEJ) with the assistance of the Africa Development Bank. It responded to the concern of youth employment in Togo and promoted entrepreneurship in growth sectors, particularly the agricultural sector. The objective of this project is to create the conditions for more inclusive economic growth by improving youth employability and promoting entrepreneurship in growth sectors. It aimed to create 19,600 jobs by 2020 targeting the maize, cassava, soybean, small ruminant and poultry sectors. The project was a great success, assisting almost double the initial target of youth. Overall, 35,000 jobs were in agricultural SMEs (AfDB 2020).

Provision of Input Subsidies and Irrigation to Improve Food Security

In Madagascar, the Government has been supplying critical inputs such as seeds and fertilisers under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. According to the Madagascar National Report (2019), in 2018, 132,766 farmers benefited from the distribution of agricultural input subsidies. These programs under the Ministry of Agriculture had a positive impact on the productivity of farmers, increasing rice production from 3,650,000 tonnes in 2016 to 4,030,000 tonnes in 2018 and thereby increasing food availability in the country (Madagascar National Report, 2019). In 2013, the African Development Bank also funded and launched a program intended to improve local agricultural infrastructure through the refurbishment of irrigation channels in order to mitigate the impacts of the region's extreme vulnerability to climate change. By the end of December 2018, the district of Toliara had 74 km of canals and 40 km of protective dykes covering 5,800 hectares of irrigated land, as well as three warehouses for food storage (AfDB, 2018).

Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program (AGP) increased agricultural productivity, skills and empowered female farmers. Under the AGP, farmers were trained, supplied with critical agricultural inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizer and agricultural extension services. The extension services benefited both male and female headed households. In accordance with policy principles, 30 per cent of the beneficiaries had to be women farmers while 10 per cent should be youth. Since the implementation of the programme, productivity of major food crops has been increasing with an average productivity from 16.5 quintal per hectare in 2010/11 to 24.15 quintal per hectare in 2017/18 while total production increased from 221.8 million quintals to 306 million quintals in the same period (Ethiopia National Report, 2019).

To enhance capacity of farmers to improve crop and livestock production and productivity by 2021, the Government of Gambia implemented various initiatives, including; training of extension workers and farmers on good agricultural practices and, provision of production inputs (fertilizer, seeds, farm implement, test kits, materials & equipment, Irrigation facilities etc). 571 Farmers were trained on Good Agricultural Practices, climate smart agriculture on Warehouse Management, Marketing, and on livestock production & management. 11 communities benefited from inputs, water supply, WASH support and training. This result has contributed to strengthening the extension system and farmer capacities through farmer field schools and surpassed annual targets (Gambia National Report, 2019).

To build resilience of farmers to climate shocks and boost productivity of land through the means of irrigation, the Government of Malawi developed the Irrigation Master Plan and Investment Framework (IMPIF). Under IMPIF, the sector expects to increase irrigated land from 104,000 ha to 220,000 ha by 2035. This target is to be attained in three phases: Phase I 2015 -2020 (20,000 ha); Phase II 2021-2025 (28,500 ha) and III 2025 2035 (67,500 ha). Currently, 11,600 ha have been developed, representing 97 per cent of the first 3-year target achieved and 58 per cent of the entire phase 1 target. The IMPIF implementation is on track, as the hectarage under irrigation has increased steadily since 2010. Through projects, the sector has increased irrigation coverage of smallholder holdings by 18.6 per cent – from coverage of 4,947.10 smallholder holdings in 2013/14 to 5,965.58 in 2017/18. A total of 2,590 hectares have also been rehabilitated following various government schemes. To ensure that the country has good quality seeds which are a prerequisite to increasing agricultural productivity and to achieve food security at household and national levels in the long run, the National Seed Policy, launched in 2018. A total of 49 technologies have been released on crop varieties, agronomy practices and pesticides. These include technologies on maize, rice, sorghum, common beans, cotton, bambara nuts, composite manure, irrigation, field crop pesticides and post-harvest pesticides which has also helped in boosting the food and nutrition security status of the country (Malawi National Report, 2019).

Through the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) E-Voucher, the Government of Zambia provided subsidised inputs to farmers using electronic vouchers. The programme started with 13 pilot districts in 2015/16 and scaled up to 39 districts and countrywide in the 2016/17 and 2018/19 agricultural seasons. In the initial 13 E-Voucher pilot districts, 85 per cent of the households redeemed fertilizer and maize seed. Of the remaining 15 per cent, the highest share of households redeemed livestock inputs such as veterinary drugs. By the end of 2018, there were over 850,000 beneficiaries. The programme had a few challenges including late payments to suppliers and agro dealers, selective activation of cards and attempted sabotage. The e- voucher programme was successful in creating jobs and improving overall income of farmers. It also identified the great potential for crop diversification (Zambia National Report, 2019; ELDIS, 2016; PMRC, 2019).

The Government of Nepal has been providing critical inputs such as subsidies to farmers in the form of fertilizers and agriculture credits. Transport subsidies were also provided to ensure food availability for remote districts that are most vulnerable to food shortages. The Central Bank channelled bank credits in agriculture through mandatory and directed lending programs to ensure banks and financial institutions meet their obligations to invest a required percentage of their total portfolio to agriculture. The Insurance Board and the Central Bank implemented a subsidized insurance programme to ensure that the investments in agriculture provided by the banks and financial institutions do not default. Insurance products have been developed to insure against damage of crops due to bad monsoons, natural disasters such as floods, drought and hailstorms (Nepal National Report, 2019).

The Government of Senegal supported producers with subsidized inputs, freeze on imports, agricultural support and advice, and export promotion in phytosanitary control and compliance with export standards, the engagement of producers, financing of small projects by agencies and projects, and capacity building through training sessions on good horticultural practices. The support from the Government increased productivity, as fruit and vegetable production reached 1,446,360 tonnes in 2018 compared to 860,000 tonnes in 2011. Fruit production increased by almost 3 per cent in 2018. Production is mainly driven by vegetables (1,202,288 tonnes) with a contribution of 83.12 per cent and 17 per cent for fruit (244,072 tonnes) (Senegal National Report, 2019).

Land Reform and Rehabilitation to Alleviate Poverty and Food Insecurity

The National Rehabilitation Programme (NRP) to benefit rural farmers was initiated by the National Land Commission Secretariat (NLCS) of Bhutan. The aim of the programme was to alleviate poverty and food insecurity by allocating economically viable farming land on a freehold basis. The Program was a success story with more than 6,536 landless households allotted with 23,800 acres (3.6 percent of total arable land) of farming land with an inclusive resettlement package. The Land Use Right System (URS) was also introduced to enhance economic livelihood opportunities. The URS allows beneficiaries to use state land as long as the land is being used productively for the purpose for which the land is allotted through payment of taxes at par with existing land tax (Bhutan National Report, 2019). While not directly linked to the NRP, as of 2018, 45 per cent of women in rural areas owned land compared to 51 per cent of men in Bhutan. In urban areas, the percentage of women with land ownership was also 45 per cent, whilst for men 49 per cent (National Commission for Women and Children, 2019). In 2016, the Royal Government of Bhutan introduced the Land Use Certificate (LUC) programme to enhance the productive use of land and promote gainful employment by encouraging the youth to take up large scale economic activities such as commercial farming. Approximately 2,500 graduates were orientated on the programme. In 2018, six youth groups comprising of 58 members joined the programme (National Commission for Women and Children, 2019) .

In Eritrea, the UNDP supported a pilot land tenure policy (replacing the customary system). The new land tenure system secures women's land rights, which were not provided for previously. In 2015, 23 villages, with 5,500 households (37 per cent female headed), benefited from secured land tenure. As a result, local communities increased investment in their land by doing extensive farmland terracing and engaging in soil and water conservation activities. Farmers planted 125,000 tree seedlings for fuelwood, construction material and income from the sale of timber. Given the huge success of the project, communities from other areas are demanding replication of these practices and the Government is considering scaling up the project. UNDP noted that it would support the efforts of the scale up by encouraging community engagement in local decision-making processes, among other activities (United Nations, 2016).

In June 2018, Cambodia's Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction officially announced the introduction of the new land title with a Quick Response (QR) code registration system. This upgrade was created to help ease the management of databases of the General Department of Topography and Geography, give fast access to the information and effectively put an end to fake land titles. The printed QR code allows verification of the data on the title by the title-holder using the QR code reader app downloadable on a smartphone (Construction-property, 2018). Since it was put into effect in 2018, land registration has increased from 28 per cent in 2011 to 73.25% in 2018. The technology has assisted in settling 8353 complaints of land disputes. Since its implementation land has been provided to a total of 78,545 families (equivalent to 140, 765.47 ha) (Cambodia National Report, 2019).

2.3 TRADE

Strengthening the contribution of trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction is especially important to the LDCs, which remain far below the target of doubling their share of global exports by 2020 (United Nations, 2019). Trade is an integral part of both the IPoA and the SDGs, acknowledging its potential to create decent employment, including for women, integrate regional and global value chains and generate sufficient foreign exchange earnings to cover imports of intermediary and capital goods needed for industrialisation (UNOHRLLS, 2016).

Trade is critical for LDCs in order to enhance access to finance and technology and to overcome constraints of mostly small domestic markets. It can also play an important role in decent employment creation including for women. Since 2011, world exports have seen a rapid increase, from $4.4 trillion in 2011 to $5.8 trillion in 2018, while the value of exports by the LDCs grew only by $25 billion during the same period, to $241 billion in 2018 (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

The long-standing marginalization of LDCs in international trade further deepened from 2011 to 2018. The share in world merchandise exports peaked at just above 1 per cent in 2011 and then deteriorated continuously to 0.89 per cent in 2015 and slightly recovered to 0.98 per cent in 2018 due to decreasing primary commodity prices, particularly petroleum (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Investigating the share of the LDCs group of total exports of goods and services a similar resumé can be drawn. While the share peaked two years later at 1 per cent in 2013, it has decreased to 0.84 per cent in 2018 which is below the figure of 2011 (0.89 per cent) (UNCTADStats, 2020).

Over the period of implementation, the product structure of LDCs total exports was mainly focused on merchandise. Manufactured goods as a percentage of merchandise exports has been increasing by 10 percentage points to 46 per cent from 2011 to 2018. Still, the majority of LDCs are still heavily reliant on exports of primary commodities, even though the overall share of exports of primary commodities, precious stones and non-monetary gold as a percentage of all merchandise products decreased from 78 to 64 per cent from 2011 to 2018. Still, African LDCs report far higher shares above 90 per cent than their Asia-Pacific peers who reported a decrease from 41 to 27 per cent in the last decade. This heavy reliance increases LDCs' vulnerability to shocks affecting commodity prices and other exogenous factors such as climate related shocks (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Another concern is that the contribution of merchandise exports to international trade from LDCs are driven by only 5 LDCs – Angola, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Zambia accounting for 63 per cent. Interestingly, Angola and Bangladesh alone already account for 42 per cent of the LDCs' group share (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

Market access has been a challenge for LDCs during the decade of implementation. To grant improved market access for LDC products, WTO members reaffirmed their commitment to duty-free, quota-free market access for the LDCs at the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the WTO. Members agreed that the 15-year service waiver should be operationalized (State of LDCs, 2014). In 2013, Duty-free quota-free (DFQF) market access for LDCs in developed economies increased only slightly, reaching 84 per cent in 2014. However, access varied significantly by products – with agricultural and manufactured exports (except textile and clothing) having almost completely free market access (98 per cent and 97 per cent respectively). The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) scheme, which grants preferential market access by the US to African countries including 26 LDCs, was renewed until 2025.

The design and application of preferential rules of origin (ROO) also plays a crucial role for enabling LDCs to make use of preferential market access and enhance their exports. Since the adoption of the LDC Services Waiver in 2011, 25 countries and regional groups indicated sectors and modes where they intended to provide preferences to LDC services and service providers as of February 2015. Between 2011 and 2014, three LDCs acceded to the WTO (Vanuatu in 2012, Lao PDR in 2013 and Yemen in 2014). The accession packages for Afghanistan and Liberia were approved at the MC10, resulting in Afghanistan and Liberia becoming members in July 2016, increasing the total to 36 LDCs (State of LDCs, 2016). Aid for Trade (AfT) to LDCs has also seen some improvement, with increased disbursements for LDCs to US$11 billion in 2013, mainly for economic infrastructure (State of LDCs, 2016).

Improving Trade Facilitation: Enhancing Coordination and Cooperation of National Agencies Responsible for Border and Customs Controls

To improve the facilitation of trade and free movement of people and goods across the border, the Government of Lesotho and Mauritania both adopted the Automated Customs System (ASYCUDA World) and the government of Lesotho introduced the e-VISA in 2017 for electronic application and approval of VISAs into the country. In Lesotho, these systems reduced the time it takes for businesses to register for licenses, tax clearance, import/export permits and residents permits.

Similarly, in Mauritania the system also helped to reduce the time of customs clearance. In 2014, the compulsory pre-shipment inspection was abolished and the amount of documentation required for import and export was reduced (Lesotho National Report, 2019; Mauritania National Report, 2019).

The East African Community (EAC) Partner States established free trade on goods among themselves, and a Common External Tariff (CET) applying to goods imported from the rest of the world. All partner states including South Sudan are successfully implementing the EAC CET. The introduction of CET within the implementation framework of Customs Union (CU) has reduced tariffs among the Partner States and provided a good environment for cross border trade (South Sudan National Report, 2019).

The Government of Bangladesh gradually implemented the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO as per the notification submitted to the WTO. In implementing the TFA, various initiatives and projects were undertaken such as the National Board of Revenue's National Single Window (NSW) project. The NSW and other initiatives facilitated trade and reduced the cost of doing business further. Currently, Bangladesh enjoys the Duty-Free & Quota-Free (DFQF) market access in almost all developed countries, except USA and Russia, for almost all products. Many developing countries have also extended similar market access for a varied range of products. The Flexible Rules of Origin associated with the DFQF has also played a vital role in utilizing the available market access facilities. Since these initiatives, Bangladesh has been performing well in trade, particularly in the export sector. Export earnings increased from US$ 22.93 billion in FY 2011 to US$ 40.53 billion in FY 2019, with export growth of about 177 per cent during this period (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

The Royal Government of Bhutan has invested heavily in infrastructure development to support trade facilitation, enhance connectivity, and reduce travel time and distance for larger economic gains. The Government built more than 18,088 km of roads, linking the capital, Thimphu with the Central and Eastern Districts, plus a series of north-south connections to the Indian Border, including the main access between Thimphu and the border at Phuentsholing. Bhutan and Bangladesh signed an agreement on the use of inland waterways to transport bilateral trade and transit cargoes between the two countries following which the first consignment using inland waterways arrived from Bangladesh to Bhutan in July 2019. Bhutan also implemented the Automated Customs System to bring its customs rules and regulations into line with best international practice. Currently, nearly 85 per cent of trade (total export) is with a single trading partner, India. The India-Bhutan bilateral trade treaty was signed in July 2017 to enhance Bhutan's access to countries beyond India. The treaty permits a wide range of Bhutanese goods destined for third-party markets to transit through India without paying Indian duties (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

The Lao PDR Trade Portal was established in 2012 as a follow-up action from the approval of the Trade Facilitation Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015. The trade portal committee has been putting great efforts to improve the functionality of the portal by ensuring the availability of legal documents, tariff rates, forms and import-export procedures. This helps both local and foreign businesses to register in Lao PDR. The country has made tremendous progress in developing its transport infrastructure to support and facilitate the flow of trade. Around 85 per cent of the rural population now live in villages with all-weather road access. In 2009, the One District, One Product Strategy was inaugurated as a government strategy to reduce poverty, create jobs, and equip people with relevant skills, whilst bringing Lao products to the regional and international market. In May 2017, under the One District, One Product Strategy the Trade Department under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce recorded more than 484 products from 17 provinces and Vientiane Capital, and awarded more than 130 businesses with the One District, One Product trademark. On 26th July 2018, a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) was set up in accordance with Decision No. 48/PM. (Lao PDR National Report, 2019).

With assistance from the World Bank, the Government of Malawi developed Stream Coordinating Border Agencies through the Coordinated Border Management System Program. The Border Management System has its own border cabinet at national level to manage affairs within the country. The Government has also developed a One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) to ensure that transactions are done on one side of the border (one country) and an electronic single window to facilitate importing and exporting. To oversee trade matters including transit, the Government established the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) (Malawi National Report, 2019). The Government of Lesotho also established a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) in September 2017 as a multi stakeholder body to facilitate the domestic coordination and implementation of the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement and to oversee the overall national trade facilitation initiatives. The role of the NTFC among others is to develop medium and long-term plans that address trade facilitation issues and to advocate for the incorporation of the plans into implementation plans of relevant ministries and agencies in Lesotho (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

Box 2: The "One Stop Border Post" Project: Case of Tanzania and Zambia

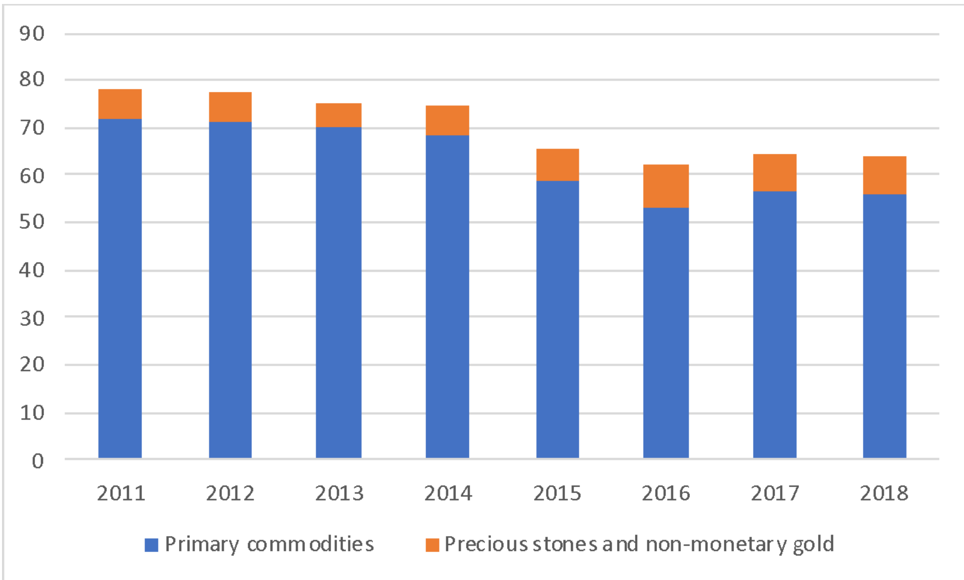
The core objective of the "One Stop Border Post (OSBP)" was to improve road transport infrastructure between Tanzania and Kenya through the priority road corridors in the sub-region. Within the context of cross-border cooperation and poverty reduction, the main goal of the African Development Bank's intervention in this sector was to support regional integration, cross border trade, tourism, socio-economic development of the zone and contribute to the reduction of poverty. The African Development Fund, the concessional arm of the African Development Bank, extended loans of US$88 million to the United Republic of Tanzania and US$107 million to the Republic of Kenya to build a modern and more efficient "One Stop Border Post". The financing also covered the construction of a 240-km road from Arusha through Namanga to Athi River, near Nairobi. Co-financed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the infrastructure project also facilitates traffic between Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. The "One Stop Border Post" project supports the development priorities of both the Governments of Tanzania and Kenya. It is also in compliance with the Bank Group's strategy of promoting economic co-operation, regional integration and multinational infrastructure projects. The ongoing impact of the project includes increased cross border traffic, increased cross border tourism, increased social-economic activities at the principal towns of Arusha, Namanga and Nairobi, and both Tanzania's and Kenya's coast line. The project fosters economic integration by helping to eliminate physical barriers to cross-border trade and improving the flow of production factors. The new OSBP makes crossing the border faster and easier and has reduced clearing times for goods.

To enhance trade facilitation with neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, the government of Zambia set up one stop shops. Currently, a one-stop border post is operational at Chirundu Border with Zimbabwe (Zambia National Report, 2015). The application of an automated system for customs data and one-stop border posts at Chirundu has cut the border crossing time from nine days to about nine hours (UN, 2014). A similar facility is underway at Nakonde Border. The aim is to reduce the time taken to clear goods at border posts and facilitate trade. Due to these programmes as well as improved productive capacities, there has been a steady growth in Non-Traditional Exports (NTEs), both in absolute terms and relative to total exports. The NTEs accounted for 9 per cent of total exports in 2010 and grew to 21.8 per cent by 2014. A total of 250 products were exported to 188 countries notably within Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Asia (Zambia National Report, 2015).

2.4 COMMODITIES

Investing in Value Addition and Diversifying Commodities to Strengthen the Resilience of the National Economy from Shocks

Figure 3: Average share of primary commodities, precious stones and non-monetary gold as a percentage of total merchandise exports in LDCs



Source: UNCTADStats, 2020. Own illustration.

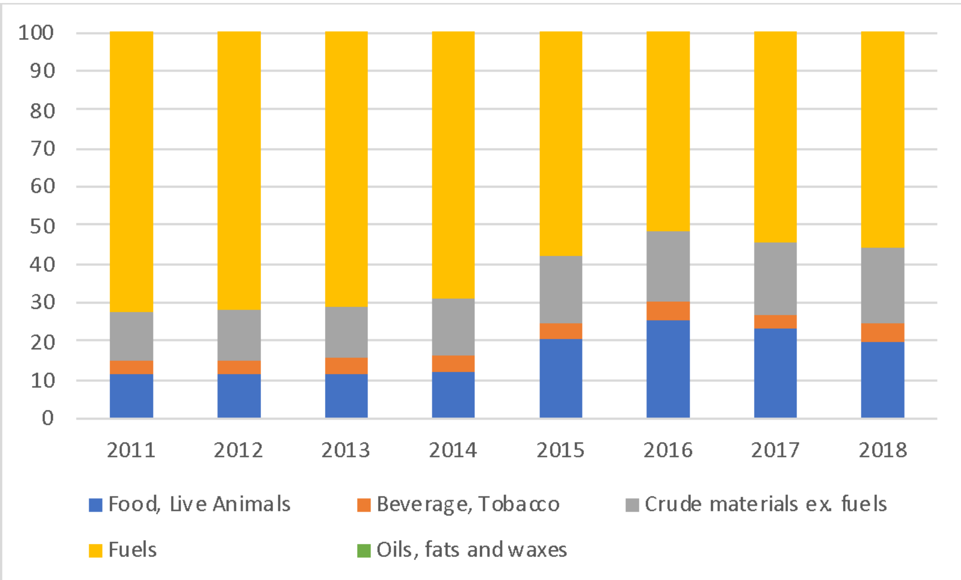
As discussed in section 2.3, exports of the majority of LDCs are still dominated by primary commodities (including oil and minerals), precious stones and non-monetary gold. However, some progress in diversifying products can be found when analysing UNCTAD's product concentration index of exports which decreased from 0.42 to 0.23. Nonetheless, many LDCs still reported high concentration rates and the overall rate of LDCs' exports was more than three times higher than the concentration index of world exports in 2018 (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Over-reliance on primary commodities continues to be a major risk, exposing LDCs to price volatilities, which directly affect GDP growth, and fiscal and export revenues (UNCTAD, 2019).

The average share of primary commodities, precious stones and non-monetary gold [23]exports across the LDCs, which had increased significantly during the commodity boom, continued at around 78

[23] According to UNCTAD STAT product groups based on the third review of the Standard international trade classification (SITC), primary commodities consist of the following categories SITC 0 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 68, while

per cent in 2011, with a much higher share in African LDCs at 94 per cent compared to figures in Asia and the Pacific at 41 per cent. Since 2011, commodity prices declined, which resulted in a reduction of their share in total merchandise exports in the LDCs, falling from 78 per cent in 2011 to 64 per cent in 2018. Excluding precious stones and non-monetary gold, figure 3 shows that the average share of primary commodities exports in LDCs decreased from 72 per cent in 2011 to 56 per cent of total merchandise exports in 2018 (UNCTADStats, 2020). Lower fuel prices severely affected fuel exporters and contributed to the shrinkage of the share of commodities in total merchandise exports. Fuel exports decreased by 45 per cent in between 2014 and 2015 and by 21 per cent in 2016 compared to 2015.In the two following years fuel exports increased by 28 and 15 per cent. Nonetheless, the average share of fuel exports of total merchandise exports across LDCs has fallen from 49 per cent in 2011 to 25 per cent in 2016 and only slightly recovered afterwards to 27 per cent in 2018. The sharpest decline of the average share was of 13 percentage points between 2014 and 2015 (UNCTADStats, 2020).

Figure 4: Average share of primary commodities categories as a percentage of total primary commodities exports (excluding non−ferrous metals exports)[24] in LDCs



Source: UNCTADStats, 2020. Own Illustration.

Disaggregating primary commodities exports further excluding non-ferrous metals exports, one finds that food and live animals as well as mineral fuels are driving this dependence. Their share of all primary commodities exports decreased slightly during the IPoA period from around 85 per cent to slightly over three quarter of the total of primary commodities exports excluding non-ferrous metals exports. Whereas, the importance of food and live animals as a share of primary commodities exports has increased from 11.3 to 20.2 per cent from 2011 to 2018, the share of mineral fuels decreased sharply from 74.0 to 53.2 per cent from 2011 to 2016 and slightly recovered to 57.3 per cent in 2018. Both changes have been largely driven by Asia-Pacific LDCs who reported

manufactured goods cover the following categories SITC 5 to 8 less 667 and 68. Food and live animals is SITC 0, Beverages and tobacco is SITC 1, Crude materials, excluding fuels is SITC 2, Mineral fuels is SITC 3, Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes is SITC 4. Chemical products is SITC 5. Machinery and transport equipment is SITC 7 and other manufactured goods represent SITC 6 and SITC 8 less 667 and 68.

[24] Non-ferrous metals exports, despite belong to the primary commodities category, are not included in this distribution as the weighted average for all LDCs is driven only by a few LDCs.

an increase from 21.3 to 43.4 per cent in its share of food and live animals, whereas their respective share of mineral fuels exports has fallen sharply by almost 30 percentage points to 33.1 per cent. The increase of African LDCs' share of food and live animals to 14.3 per cent in 2018 covered roughly half of the 13 percentage point decrease of their commodities export share of mineral fuels to 63.5 per cent in 2018. Some of the variations in figure 4 can be explained by the variations in commodity prices.

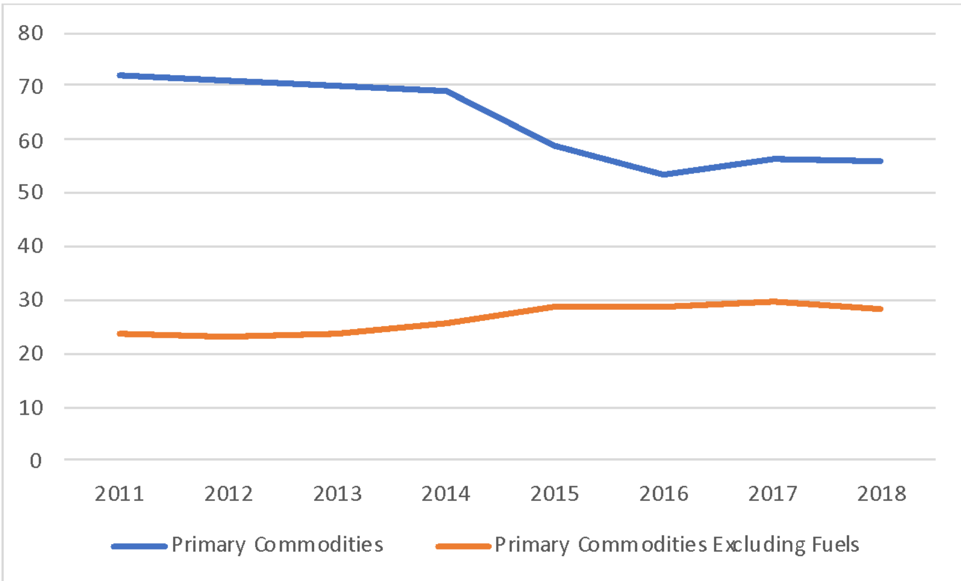
Figure 5: Average share of primary commodities precious stones and non-monetary gold, and manufactured goods as a percentage of merchandise exports in LDCs[25]

Source: UNCTADStats, 2020. Own Illustration.

Commodities can be aggregated into two broader categories – primary commodities, precious stones and non-monetary gold, and manufactured goods. By monitoring the developments of these two categories in LDCs, economic development can be potentially identified with exports shifting from primary commodities to higher value added commodities – manufactured goods (UN Stats, 2017). Figure 5 is showing primary commodities, precious stones and non-monetary gold, and manufactured goods as a percentage of merchandise exports showing an increase of 10 percentage points to 46 per cent from 2011 to 2018. However, this increase was solely driven by Asia Pacific LDCs whose share of manufactured goods as a percentage of merchandise exports has increased from 57 per cent in 2011 to 72 per cent in 2018. Asia Pacific LDCs merchandise exports largely concentrate on exports of textile fibers, yarn, fabrics and clothing which amount for 61 per cent of the total merchandise exports in 2018, up from 50 per cent in 2011. In African LDCs, they remained roughly constant between 4 and 6 per cent of their total merchandise exports. However, one major drawback is that real economic development cannot be easily detected for countries with large shares of fuel exports. In this case, it might be useful to monitor changes excluding fuels exports which is done in figure 6 below which shows that the decline in primary commodities was mainly driven by a decline in fuel exports.

[25] The share of primary commodities and manufactured goods is both weighted by merchandise exports which explains the figure not adding up to exactly 100 per cent.

Figure 6: Average share of primary commodities and primary commodities excluding fuels as a percentage of merchandise exports in LDCs[26]



Source: UNCTADStats, 2020. Own Illustration.

During the IPoA period, commodity prices declined rapidly in 2014, after a peak in 2011. Food prices fell by 27.5 per cent between 2011 and 2015, while the prices of agricultural raw materials declined by 46 per cent. The decline in food prices were primarily driven by a drop in cereal prices, due to higher global cereal production. In 2016, food prices increased slightly by on average 4 per cent. Recent decreases in food prices have made food less expensive for the urban poor, while negatively affecting the incomes of rural food producers (State of LDCs, 2016).

Furthermore, price declines and volatility have increased uncertainty and reduced investments in agriculture. LDC economies are mostly dominated by natural resource-based sectors with limited technology spillovers or opportunities for productivity growth and quality upgrading. Price drops were especially significant for cotton (55 per cent), sugar (47 per cent) and coffee (45 per cent), which are all main export commodities of LDCs. Metal prices also declined by 45 per cent. The price of metals have risen from lows in early 2016 on account of strong demand, partly from China's stimulus to the property and construction sectors. Oil prices remained relatively constant initially but dropped sharply in 2015, by 51 per cent (State of LDCs, 2016). In 2015, deteriorating terms of trade led to economic contraction in most of the net oil-exporting LDCs including Angola, Chad, South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea[27] and Yemen. Similar effects are expected in 2020 as due to the COVID-19 crisis, the oil prices have fallen to an all-time low. The excessive dependence on a few primary commodities constitutes a source of vulnerability and emphasizes the need to promote structural transformation that would lead to greater diversification of the economies of the LDCs.

Mechanisms to mitigate and manage the risks associated with the volatility of commodity prices are largely lacking in LDCs. Greater geographic diversification of trade has reduced the likelihood of

[26] The share of primary commodities and manufactured goods is both weighted by merchandise exports which explains the figure exceeding 100 per cent in some parts.
[27] Note that Equatorial Guinea graduated from the LDC category in 2017

shock from a single trading partner, helping countries become more resilient. Value addition and diversification is also another technique that helped LDCs mitigate the risks. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania successfully developed new sectors of their economies, and/or achieved a more balanced mix of existing sectors in favour of higher value added, and/or upgraded the quality of products and services being produced during the IPoA decade as highlighted below.

Each year, the Government of Madagascar strives to broaden its export destinations. This allows the country to diversify its markets which plays an important role in promoting export products and expanding outlets. Madagascar managed to source an average of 8 new export countries during the IPoA period with nine new countries in 2015, seven in 2016, eight in 2017 and nine in 2018 (Madagascar National Report, 2019).

To reduce the reliance on poppy cultivation and improve local and household economies, the Government of Afghanistan initiated the Community Based Agriculture and Rural Development Program. Through this program, 163 communities across three provinces were supported with the production and marketing of high-value crops. To support the community's production of the new crops, 624 vegetable processing kits, 180 honeybee production kits and 624 packaging equipment were distributed. Additionally, 109 commercial greenhouses for aloe vera and 39 raisin houses were constructed (Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Afghanistan, 2019).

The Government of Malawi prioritised value addition as a key strategy to enhancing trade during the IPoA period. To enhance the country's agro-processing capacity, the Government of Malawi constructed seven Value Addition Centres and procured and installed agro-processing machines in six districts. Cassava, beans, soya beans and pigeon peas were earmarked for value addition and value chain development. Agro-processing has commenced in six of the seven value addition centres. The Centres have been linked to markets where producers are selling their products at higher prices. According to the 2015 National Leather Value Chain Strategy, Malawi's leather sector has potential to significantly contribute to economic growth of the economy. Based on its animal resource base of goats, bovine and sheep, the value chain has potential of grossing USD102 million dollars if all hides and skins produced in Malawi are processed into finished products. It is, therefore, estimated that at full potential optimisation, the value chain could contribute about 3.9 percent to the GDP. To promote value addition in leather products, the Malawi Enterprise Productivity Enhancement (MEPE) Project built productive capacity for MSMEs and cooperatives in the leather and textiles & garment sector. So far, the project has supported MSMEs and cooperatives with sewing equipment, leather products making equipment, oil crushing, refining and other tools including laboratory equipment. Members of cooperatives have steadily been gaining ground in finding domestic markets but are yet to register for export trade (Malawi National Report, 2019). Commodity export in Malawi increased from about 63,000 in 2011 to 1.08 million in 2018 (UNCTADStats).

The success recorded in the context of cotton production, which positions Benin at the top of the list of producers, is the result of a long process of reforms and work. Just a few weeks after coming to power, the Government of H.E. President Patrice Talon handed over management of the cotton sector to the Inter-professional Cotton Association, restoring the framework agreement between the Association and the Government. The Government set a number of objectives for the

Association to achieve including, to attract farmers and producers to grow cotton; to review the technical routes for greater productivity of cotton and crops per hectare; to reassure producers of immediate payments once their products are sold; to deploy agricultural and food inputs on time; and to pay arrears owed to producers. The government and private industry invested in modernizing the entire cotton supply chain and provided increased supply of seed and fertilizer inputs (USDA, 2019). As a result, between 2011 and 2015, production almost doubled. In 2018, 678,000 tonnes of seed cotton were harvested, approximately five times the production of 2010 and approximately twice that of 2015. The increase in production made Benin the leading producer of cotton in Francophone West Africa in 2015 and 2017-2018 (Benin National Report, 2019; USDA, 2019; UNCTADStats).

In Zambia, Traditional Exports (TEs), namely cooper and cobalt, continue to dominate export earnings having accounted for over 70 per cent of merchandise exports over the IPoA review period. Zambia recorded a positive trade balance during the earlier part of the review period until 2015 when the country recorded a negative trade balance, which progressively reduced up to 2018. The relatively low diversity of exports and increasing negative trade balance called for the need to continue with efforts to diversify the country's export base. Non-traditional exports (NTEs) presented substantial opportunity for export growth and diversification, however their contribution remains inadequate, averaging about 26.3 per cent of total exports over the last ten years. NTEs from manufactured products are however dominated by products such as sugar, copper wire and portland cement. The diversity of export products beyond copper and cobalt has increased. The number of export products has increased from as low as 704 products in 2005, to 1,917 in 2010 and 1,996 in 2019. Zambia is now exporting to 228 export destinations in 2018 from 116 countries in 2010 as a result of trade fairs and exhibitions (Zambia National Report, 2019).

Lao PDR remains committed to the multilateral trading system. During the review period, it improved its WTO commitments by ratifying the Trade Facilitation Agreement on 29 September 2015. Since its accession, the country has undertaken several trade facilitation measures. It made significant progress in improving its customs procedures and harmonizing them with international standards. These included the automation of customs offices all over the country, and the introduction of risk management in inspection to allow available resources to focus on high-risk cargo designated to the red channel. These measures, along with other initiatives, such as coordinated border management, post clearance audit, advance rulings, and provision of appeal, resulted in a considerable decline in customs clearance times. Furthermore, the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) is now operational at 24 border posts. Lao PDR published a Trade Facilitation Road Map (TFRM) of Lao PDR for 2017-22, recommending, inter alia, active collaboration with the private sector in implementing trade facilitation measures and emphasizing cross-border cooperation and regional integration (WTO, 2019).

2.5 HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

During the IPoA implementation period, the majority of the LDCs had Human Development Index (HDI) scores at 0.55 or below, putting them in the low human development tier. The latest data from UNDP (2017), shows the LDC HDI average is 0.524 compared to the global average 0.728. LDCs face unstable governments, widespread poverty, lack of access to healthcare and poor education. The group also suffer with low incomes and low life expectancies coupled with high birth rates. With widespread malnutrition and 44.1 per cent of people living below the poverty line Niger has the lowest HDI score amongst the LDCs and in the world with a score of 0.354.

The 12 LDC exceptions that reached the medium human development tier, are Timor Leste (0.625), Bhutan (0.612), Kiribati (0.612), Bangladesh (0.608), Vanuatu (0.603), Lao PDR (0.601), Sao Tome and Principe (0.589), Zambia (0.588), Cambodia (0.582), Angola (0.581), Myanmar (0.578) and Nepal (0.574) (UNDP, 2017). Bhutan attained progress during the IPoA period by using the income earned from its national resources (hydropower) to develop its human assets. Guided by the philosophy of gross national happiness, and a Constitutional mandate to provide free basic education and health services, Bhutan's development approach is unique. By allocating its highest share of capital to education and health, the country provides innovative financing through the Bhutan Health Trust Fund, higher salaries for teachers and health professional, targeted poverty reduction programmes and an extension of paid maternity leave (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). Bangladesh is gradually improving in the Human Development Index (HDI). The achievements are a result of the Government allocating 22.09 per cent of budget to the HRD related sectors such as Education and Technology, Health and Family Welfare, Women and Children, Social Welfare, Youth Sports Development, Culture, Labour and Employment etc. During 2012, Bangladesh secured 143rd position in the UNDP HDI and has improved six places to 137th position in 2018. The value of the HDI index was 0.55 in 2011 which increased to 0.62 in 2018 (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

Preparing the Youth for Work Through Skills Development, Youth Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training

Analysing the youth literacy rate as a percentage of the population aged 15-24 one finds that the average of Asia-Pacific LDCs from 2011 to 2018 is 83 per cent, while African LDCs reported a lower youth literacy rate of 71 per cent of the young population. For both country groups, female youth literacy rates were below the group averages. However, with a difference of 3 percentage points compared to 1 percentage points in Asia-Pacific LDCs, the gap was larger in African LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

Skills development is crucial for both productive capacity building and human and social development. The demographic profile of the LDCs, with higher proportion of youth than other country groupings, presents these countries with the challenge of providing adequate education and decent employment opportunities for a large youth population (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). The challenge for LDCs is simultaneously creating jobs for the growing youth population whilst addressing related concerns such as skills mismatch, working poverty and suboptimal school to work transition and economic expansion driven by capital-intensive sectors (World Youth Report, 2018). The 211 million people aged between 15 and 24 years represent 20 per cent of the population of LDCs in 2020.

Medium variant population statistics estimate show that this population group will grow by 21 per cent from 2020 to 2030 whereas the average world growth will be only around 7 per cent (UN DESA, 2020b). According to ILO, in 2018, nearly 67 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 were unemployed in the LDCs (World Youth Report, 2018). COVID-19 has aggravated the situation. According to the Royal Government of Bhutan (2020), COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the tourism and related service sector. This has led to a decline in wages and income that may negatively impact livelihoods and poverty in the country. Furthermore, having repatriated a substantial amount of Bhutanese from foreign countries, mostly youth, has aggravated the unemployment pool in the nation.

Given the weak structural transformation in many LDCs, there is little formal employment in industry and more than two thirds of the population is still engaged in agriculture. Many young people in LDCs face considerable difficulty in finding decent and secure employment. This is why many young people seek employment opportunities by migrating to other countries. According to the ILO, roughly 21 per cent of migrants from LDCs were young people in 2013 (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

The youth unemployment rate in LDCs is almost two times higher than is the case for total unemployment. These results are partly a result of the mismatch between skills and qualifications, on the one hand, and labour market demands on the other. Youth unemployment rates remain a significant concern for conflict affected LDCs. There is a close and significant relationship between unemployment, limited opportunities for youth and conflict intensity, as the most intense conflicts are closely linked to the highest levels of unemployment. The lack of educational opportunities, marginalization and low trust in the prospects of a better future are important societal factors that contribute to the involvement of young people in violence. Reducing barriers to skills development and technical and vocational education and training, starting from the secondary level, and providing lifelong learning opportunities is central in the path towards sustainable development in the LDCs (World Youth Report, 2018).

One area where policies of LDCs need to focus more to achieve structural transformation is employment. Setting employment creation as the objective of macroeconomic policies and as the means to achieve meaningful and sustainable improvements in living standards in LDCs would need to address several bottlenecks, including enhancing technical, vocational education and training. In this context, LDCs need to not only seek to raise the rate of output growth but also to increase the labour intensity of growth. Furthermore, disadvantaged groups like youth and women need to be targeted (UNOHRLLS, 2016). To overcome the challenges of skills mismatch, the Ministry of Labour Skills and Innovation in Malawi has been implementing various programs to support the youth such as “The Graduate Internship Programme”. The programme is mainly focused on developing the necessary skills required by interns to work in the public and private sector. As a result, in 2018/19, 4,687 youths were attached to Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), with approximately 3,000 interns re-admitted for the 2019/2020 fiscal year in various MDAs (Malawi National Report, 2019).

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a crucial role in poverty reduction and increasing the likelihood of finding decent work or generating income through self-employment. Technical and vocational skills can be acquired through work placement programmes linked to secondary schooling and formal technical and vocational education, or through workbased training, including traditional apprenticeships and agricultural cooperatives (World Youth Report, 2018)

In 2015, a Task Force on Employment Creation was formed in Bhutan, to propose strategies to promote job creation and economic growth. The Royal Government of Bhutan initiated several employment and skills development programmes such as the Entrepreneurship Development Program. According to Bhutan’ s National Report, these programmes successfully employed more than 12,000 youth. The Entrepreneurship Development Program was provided to more than 3,000 youth and a Revolving Fund for New Startups was created in 2016. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) facilitated many programmes centred around employment, apprenticeships and training. Overall, the Ministry directly facilitated employment of 32,000 youths. Close to Nu 1.2 billion (approximately USD 17 million) was spent to support various employment schemes such as the direct employment scheme, apprenticeship training program, university graduates internship program, pre-employment engagement program and overseas employment scheme that benefited 27,000 youths. Under the Bhutan Education Blueprint (2014-2024) the Royal Government expanded the TVET system to absorb the 20 per cent of school leavers from higher secondary school (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

The Youth@Work programme was initiated to provide pathways to employment and self-employment for thousands of unemployed and poorly educated youth in the Solomon Islands. In 7 years of the programme being implemented, over 10,000 youths have found employment or started their own businesses in urban and rural areas directly impacting the economy and reducing the rate on unemployment in the country (Solomon Islands National Report, 2019).

Since 2011, the Government of Zambia has been implementing the Youth Development Fund, a loan-based facility, to support the integration of the youth into the economy. The objective of this fund is to avail financing to viable projects of young entrepreneurs as well as enable the youth to benefit from associated training and mentorship services. A total of 2,750 Youth Groups benefited from the Youth Development Fund from 2012 to 2015. In addition, the Youth Development Fund created a total of 742 paid jobs between 2011 and 2015. The Fund was suspended in 2016 due to several factors including low recovery rates. Given its overall success, the Government is currently reviewing modalities of enhancing the management of the Fund before it can be re-introduced. Under the Youth Skills Training Programme, the Government developed skills training programmes aimed at providing vocational and lifelong skills to the never-been and out-of-school youth as well as those who have completed their general education by equipping them with knowledge and practical skills needed for self and formal employment. Graduates are provided with start-up kits in their relevant field of study to enable them to engage in economic activities as well as prepare them for entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. Currently, twenty-three Youth Development Centres exist countrywide with an estimated 4,200 graduates annually. Over the last decade, approximately 18,430 youth have graduated from the various Youth Development Centres countrywide (Zambia National Report, 2019).

During the IPoA period, Burkina Faso and Senegal successfully implemented several nationally funded programs including: Informal Sector Support Fund (FASI), the Promotion Support Fund for Employees (FAPE) and the Support Fund for Youth Initiatives (FAIJ). The implementation of these projects and programs achieved the following significant results: (i) Creation of 67,366 jobs; (ii) 7,000 young people and women received increased income and were promoted into decent employment between 2012 and 2017 (iii) Recruitment of 10,950 young people for High labour intensive works through the Socio-professional integration program for young people; (iv) Training of 110 out-of-school and out-of-school youth in driving machinery intended for mining and public works; (v) Funding of 18,448 projects and the consolidation of 50,556 jobs by the Youth Economic Empowerment Program and women (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019). Between 2014 and 2018, the Senegalese Youth Entrepreneurship Program (PSE-J) and the Sector Professionalization Programme enabled the training of 2,453 students in six priority sectors with the support of 298 companies (Senegal National Report, 2019).

The Government of Bangladesh has devised a special scheme for providing training and temporary employment to unemployed youths under the National Service Programme (NSP). After completion of the training, the youths are offered temporary employment locally for two years in different sectors of the Government. A total of 83,626 youths have been trained in order to engage in temporary employment for two years. As of June 2015, 81,355 of the total trained youths (97.3 per cent) were engaged in temporary employment in different sectors (Bangladesh National Report, 2016).

Improving Universal Access to Safe Drinking Water and Improved Sanitation

Over the decade of implementation, while access to safe drinking water improved globally, only limited progress occurred in the LDCs. In 2017, 71 per cent of the global population (5.3 billion people) had access to safely managed drinking water. Amongst the remaining the 2.2 billion without access, 7 out of 10 lived in rural areas and one third lived in LDCs (WHO & UNICEF, 2019). The LDC's average of people using at least basic drinking water services increased from 60 per cent to 65 per cent of the population from 2011 to 2017. Significant disparities exist within countries, particularly between urban and rural areas, and among various socio-economic groups. Access to at least basic drinking water services greatly differs between African and Asia-Pacific LDCs with the latter reporting far higher access rates of 86 per cent in 2017, up from 82 per cent in 2011. Only 53 per cent of the people living in African LDCs used at least basic drinking water services in 2017, compared to 47 per cent in 2011. Investigating rural and urban areas separately, it becomes apparent that these low figures are largely driven by rural areas in African LDCs in which 40 per cent, up from 35 per cent in 2011, used safe drinking water in 2017. In comparison, almost 80 per cent of their peers in urban areas used safe drinking water facilities in 2017 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

The usage of at least basic sanitation services remains low in LDCs. In 2011, on average, 30 per cent of the population used at least basic sanitation services. This figure slightly increased to 34 per cent in 2017. Stark geographic differences prevail. The access rate is lower in African LDCs with an average share of 24 per cent in 2017, up from 21 per cent in 2011. The access rate of their Asia-Pacific peers has been above twice as high during the IPoA period. Rural areas in African LDCs are reporting the lowest rate with 17 per cent in 2017, up from 14 per cent in 2011. The highest usage of at least basic sanitation services can be found in urban areas in Asia-Pacific LDCs with 63 per cent in 2017 which is an increase of 3 percentage points from 2011 (World Bank Indicators, 2020)[28].

Non-existent or inadequate sanitation facilities and serious deficiencies in water management and wastewater treatment can have a negative impact on water provision and sustainable access to safe drinking water. Furthermore, the lack of basic sanitation and safe drinking water has negative consequences among others on health and gender equality. The mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene across LDCs is with 34 people per 100,000 almost the triple of the world's average in 2016. While all Asia-Pacific LDCs report deaths below 20 people per 100,000 inhabitants in 2016 with even 7 of the 13 Asia-Pacific LDCs having lower rates than the world's average, the death rates linked to poor sanitation are far higher in African LDCs. In 2016, Somalia, Central African Republic, Chad and Sierra Leone reported rates above 80 people per 100,000. The last three countries report also very low access to basic sanitation below 10 per cent

[28] Extracted from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.BASS.UR.ZS

of their population in 2016. Only Sao Tome and Principe's death rates are in the range of the world's average with 11.4 people per 100,000 in 2016 (World Bank Indicators, 2020). The importance of the availability of basic sanitation and safe drinking water is underlined by the number of child deaths due to diarrhoea. Even though this figure dropped substantially from 2000 to 2015, LDCs still account for roughly half of the world's child death due to diarrhoea with most of them occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 (UNICEF, 2016).

While access has slightly improved, LDCs still face challenges such as a greater proportion of people using an improved source of drinking water did not necessarily imply a reduction in the burden of time and effort to collect water nor a constant water supply 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. More than a quarter of the people in some East African LDCs devoted more than half an hour per round trip to fetch water, with the burden falling disproportionately on girls and women affecting girl's school enrolment, attendance and achievement. Adult women who collect and carry water have fewer options to earn an income, develop themselves or participate in community decision-making. In rural Benin, girls aged 6-14 spend an average of one hour a day collecting water compared with 25 minutes for their brothers. In Malawi, women consistently spend four to five times longer than men on this task. In Tanzania, a survey found school attendance to be 12 per cent higher for girls in homes located 15 minutes or less from a water source than in homes one hour or more away. Attendance rates for boys appeared to be far less affected by distance from water sources (State of LDCs report, 2013).

To ensure that rural areas were not left behind in terms of development, the Government of Malawi implemented the Sustainable Rural Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Project. Through this project, 266 sanitation facilities were constructed and 450 boreholes drilled across the country. This increased the number of people accessing clean water. The project also rehabilitated and extended 12 gravity fed schemes and constructed 2925 community water points to benefit 516,000 people in the targeted districts of Rumphi, Nkhotakota, Phalombe, Mangochi and Ntcheu (IHS IV, 2017). Since 2011, nationally the percentage of people accessing clean water has steadily increased from 83 per cent in 2011 to 87 per cent in 2019. The percentage of people with access to clean water in rural areas increased from 80 per cent in 2011, to 86 per cent in 2019 (Malawi National Report, 2019).

Increasing the Representation of Women in Politics and Decision Making Roles

Gender equality and women's empowerment are key contributors to social and economic development, yet women's empowerment in LDCs have been limited by several constraints, such as limited formal education and discrimination in the credit, land and technology markets. Long-standing socio-cultural barriers of attaching less importance to the education of girls compared to that of boys; the high prevalence of child marriage; the tendency for women to cultivate land for producing food crops and men for cash crops; and women and girls inheriting fewer assets such as land with less than 20 per cent of the world landholders being women (UN Women, 2012).

Data from the Rural Women and the Millennium Development Goals Report shows that on average, women make up around 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. Evidence indicates that if these women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase farm yields by 20 to 30 per cent, reducing the number of hungry people globally by 12 to 17 per cent. In education, modest improvements have been made in the IPoA implementation period. The proportion of girls who did not attend primary school decreased to 19.8 per cent in

2018, compared with 20.7 per cent in 2011. For the secondary level, 36.2 per cent of adolescent girls were out of school, compared to 38.4 per cent in 2011 (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

Modest progress has been achieved in expanding access to education to girls, but much more must be done. The proportion of girls of primary age out of school was 19.8 per cent in 2018, compared with 20.7 per cent in 2011. At the secondary level, in 2018, 36.2 per cent of adolescent girls were out of school, compared to 38.4 per cent in 2011. The access of women and girls to modern family planning was 57.6 per cent in 2019, compared with 50 per cent in 2010. In 2017, in the 34 LDCs for which data were available, 24.3 per cent of women and girls 15 years of age or older were subject to violence (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

A large gender gap remains in women's access to decision making and leadership. Research shows that educated women are more likely to have greater decision-making power within their households (UN Women, 2012)

In 2019, 23 per cent of the parliamentary seats in LDCs were held by women, up from 21 per cent in 2011 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). The LDCs are among the world's top performers in terms of the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, with the highest rates in 2017 observed in Rwanda (61 per cent), followed by Senegal, (42 per cent) and Mozambique (40 per cent). Overall, the average rate of women holding office in the LDCs increased from 18 per cent in 2011 to 19 per cent in 2017 (UNOHRLLS, 2018a). In Nepal, there is a statutory provision to ensure one-third of the seats for women in all elected bodies including the national parliament as well as in the government services (Nepal National Report, 2019).

Women's political participation in Ethiopia has been increasing over the IPoA decade. Since the new political reform, 50 per cent of the cabinet was female including the current President of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Sahle-work Zewde. Approximately, 38.7 per cent of members of the House of People's Representatives (HPR) are women. In the regional state's House of Peoples' representatives (HPRs), women's participation reached 48 per cent (Ethiopia National Report, 2019).

The gender parity law was adopted in Senegal in 2010. Since then, there has been increased representation of women at decision making level with a rate of 43 per cent in the National Assembly. The last legislative elections in July 2017 enabled 69 women to be elected Deputies out of 165 Parliamentarians. Women represent 47.2 per cent of the territorial elected representatives (Municipal Councillors) in all regions; In the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, 19.2 per cent are women and the Council is headed by a female President. At the government level, the percentage of women holding ministerial positions remains low with 21.2 per cent in 2014 and 25 per cent in 2018 (Senegal National Report, 2019).

During the IPoA period, the percentage of female cabinet ministers rose from 12 percent in 2011 to 25 percent in 2019, while the overall proportion of parliamentary seats held by women averaged 23.7 percent, having increased from 9 percent in 2011 to 17 percent in 2019 in Zambia. The percentage of women represented in parliament compared to men is significantly less with men representing 91 per cent in 2011 and 83 per cent in 2019. Despite the strides made at cabinet level, no females were appointed as Provincial Ministers between 2011-2019. In the Judiciary, female representation in some courts such as in the High Courts and Court of Appeal were higher by 62.5

percent and 55 percent respectively. In 2019, the Judiciary was headed by a female Chief Justice. In the courts of appeal, there were 6 females compared to 5 men and in the high court, 20 females compared to just 12 men. Also, 50 per cent more women in the commercial division than men. Although there has been a significant rise in women representation, the number remains very low to accord equal power to both women and men in national decision making. The low participation of women in leadership positions can be attributed to low education attainment, low literacy levels and the society socialization process with regard to femininity and masculinity roles (Zambia National Report, 2019).

Traditionally, Comoran women are excluded from the public decision-making circle. However, with the mobilization of civil society organizations the situation changed, sparking increased female candidates in legislative elections, as island and presidential governors (Comoros National Report, 2019). The first woman in the history of Independent Comoros was elected as the Governor of Grand Comore during the IPoA period. At the community level, the situation is evolving positively, towards more visibility and responsibility of women in the management of community life. In town halls, the proportion of women approached 30 per cent due to the law on decentralization and organization of municipal elections which require fair registration of both sexes in the lists of candidates. At the level of Governorates, there were a total of 4 women Commissioners between 2011 and 2017 (Comoros National Report, 2019).

On 2 August 2018, the Guinea Bissau Parliament unanimously approved a parity law to ensure a minimum quota of 36 per cent of women's representation to be respected in elections or appointments to the National Assembly and Local Governments with a view to achieve parity. The UN in Guinea Bissau and development partners developed a robust training and support plan for women activists and potential female candidates for upcoming elections (Guinea Bissau National Report, 2020; UNIOGBIS, 2018).

In Tuvalu, while women are elected into the Kaupule[29], traditional gendered roles make it difficult for them to actively engage in decision-making. Women representation in the Kaupule has improved from 1 out of 48 women members in 2015 to 5 out of 48 in 2016. In 2017, Tuvalu appointed its first female Ambassador (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).

The Government of Mauritania implemented a national program to promote and support the political participation of women, through several awareness-raising and training campaigns for elected women. Since the Government of Mauritania implemented the program, the presence of women in decision-making spheres has considerably improved, with 35 per cent of women in regional councils, 19.6 per cent in the National Assembly, and 31 per cent in municipal councils. The female presence in the Council of Ministers reached, at times, almost a third of the Government (Mauritania National Report, 2019).

Increasing Enrolment in Educational Institutions through Incentives and Provision of Alternative Education Programs

Modest improvements have been made in increasing enrolment rates in the last decade. The proportion of children who are out of school has decreased by 1 percentage point to 17.7 per cent from 2011 to 2018. However, this rate is still the double of the world average of 8.1 per cent. The

[29] Island Council

gross enrolment rate in secondary education increased from 41 to 53 per cent in the IPoA implementation period (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

Several LDCs have raised public expenditure on higher education to over 1 per cent of GDP during the IPoA implementation period (Benin, Burundi, Guinea, Malawi, Timor Leste) and others are close (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Togo). In Mozambique, for example, enrolment in tertiary education increased from 113,464 in 2011 to 213,930 in 2018 (UNESCO, 2016). Table 3 shows the increasing enrolment rates at all levels of education in LDCs across the decade of the IPoA.

Table 3: Enrolment rates in LDCs, all levels of education and percentage of female students[30]

	Enrolment in primary education, both sexes (number)	Percentage of students in primary education who are female (%)	Enrolment in secondary education, both sexes (number)	Percentage of students in secondary education who are female (%)	Enrolment in tertiary education, both sexes (number)	Percentage of students in tertiary education who are female (%)
2011	135,519,854	47.63	47,955,700	45.87	7,082,841	39.16
2018	155,290,803	48.29	64,424,552	47.44	9,591,720	41.23

Although substantial progress has been made since the beginning of the decade, universal primary education remains a challenge for many LDCs with persisting challenges which negatively impact the quality of teaching. Investigating the quality of education, the pupil-teacher ratio has improved slightly at the primary level as it decreased from 41 in 2011 to 37 in 2018. At the secondary level, the ratio decreased from 29 to 26. Nonetheless, the quality of education is still affected by poor basic facilities and infrastructure as well as the lack of sufficient teacher training, adequate learning and teaching materials. The lack of online education opportunities has prevented many young students in LDCs from adequate teaching during lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The poor pupil/teacher ratio has been contributing to subpar educational outcomes including low survival and completion rates at primary level. Survival rates for primary school in the LDCs as a group decreased slightly from 55.19 per cent in 2011 to 54 per cent in 2017.

While tertiary education enrolment in the LDCs has increased, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education was less than 9 per cent in 2013 compared with 33 per cent worldwide. Despite the gross enrolment rate improved slightly, the average for the LDC group remains low at 10 per cent in 2018. There have been important initiatives in the area of tertiary education in various LDCs. For instance, Senegal, Malawi and Mali have founded new universities in recent years while Afghanistan has doubled its university enrolment between 2011 and 2014 (State of LDCs report, 2014).

There has been modest progress in expanding enrolments in secondary, vocational and technical, and tertiary education, where skills for productive and decent employment are acquired. However, quality has seemed to deteriorate, partly because new entrants are not always well equipped for higher education. The mixed quality of education and limited access by marginalized groups persist as major issues. Other hindrances include insufficient and inadequate laboratories and library facilities, and very limited use of information and communication technology.

[30]Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Initiatives such as implementation of free primary education policies, increased allocation of financial resources to education, construction of new classrooms, setting up of community schools, and school-feeding programmes have helped to boost the net enrolment in education in LDCs.

In Zambia, the School Feeding Programme made a significant impact on school attendance in the rural areas. During the 2006-2010 period the number of learners in schools increased from 310,451 to 850,000 learners in the 2011 -2015 period. The programme extended to 8 provinces and was implemented in 2,400 schools during the 2011-2015 period, compared to 4 provinces supporting 829 schools during the 2006-2010 period. In the 2016-2019 period, the Government has increased the number of schools benefiting from this programme from 2400 to 2618 schools. The number of districts also increased to 39 districts which are predominantly rural. This programme has contributed to improving school attendance and retention of learners especially in rural areas where children sometimes walk long distances compared to their urban counterparts to get to school (Zambia National Report, 2019).

Box 3: Free School Meal Programmes: Case of Djibouti & Burundi

School meals in targeted rural pre, primary and middle schools combine WFP internationally-purchased commodities and fresh food purchased locally with complementary funds allocated by the Government of Djibouti. Currently, 17,000 children receive a morning snack and a hot lunch. A take-home ration of oil is provided to families of school girls as an incentive to keep them in school through the 9th grade. The WFP is supporting the capacity of the Government towards the establishment of a sustainable national school feeding programme.

Over 464,000 children in 691 schools throughout Burundi are fed at school through the home-grown school meals programme. Fresh vegetables, fortified flour and enriched vegetable oil help overcome major deficiencies in primary school children, including vitamin A and iron deficiencies, which both affect learning abilities. WFP aims to procure up to half of its food from local farmers by supporting the establishment of local farmer cooperatives. Last year WFP purchased 3,500 metric tons of local commodities — 31 percent of all food bought for school meals — injecting US$3 million into the local economy. In 2017, a WFP pilot included using local UHT milk in school meals for 40,000 children. Due to the success of the school feeding programme in Burundi, dropout rates have decreased from 15 percent (2014) to 5 percent (2017). The Government of Burundi has recognized the programme as one of the key interventions to enrol and keep children from food-insecure provinces at school, especially girls (WFP, 2017; WFP, 2018).

According to UNDP (2008), one of the most effective measures in achieving universal education is to abolish primary school user fees. Many LDCs have taken this important step, enabling millions of extra children to enrol in primary school (MTR report, 2016). In Tuvalu, primary education is not only free but enrolment of students in school is compulsory up to the age of 15, by law, and every parent must ensure their children are enrolled. In 2015, the National Enrolment Rate (NER) for early childhood education stood at approximately 85 per cent, however it has since slowly declined to approximately 77 per cent in 2018. The government with support from development partners has been investing in the country's education system. Under the Tuvalu Education Sector Plan III 2016 – 2020 the government has established Early Child Care Education (ECCE) Centres to provide teacher training of the new ECCE curriculum (Tuvalu National Report). The percentage of trained teachers at pre primary level increased from 87.88 per cent in 2016 to 91.25 per cent in 2018 (UNESCO Institute of Statistical data, 2020).

In some countries, free education extends to Secondary education. In Bhutan, the Government provides free education up to grade 10 and dedicated the largest portion of the 11th five-year plan to education and health (Bhutan National Report, 2015). Similarly, in Kiribati, primary and junior secondary components of schooling are compulsory and free. In addition, in 2015, the Kiribati Government approved the provision of subsidised stationery for students. In Eritrea, basic education is compulsory and the Government offers free education from primary to higher education (Eritrea National Report, 2015).

To ensure universal access and inclusive education, some LDCs have implemented alternative learning programmes.

A UN DESA (2019) Report found that 44 per cent of countries prevent students with disabilities from being taught in the same classroom as others and in some countries, over one in ten persons with disabilities have been refused school enrolment. Plan 2 is a training methodology that facilitates disability inclusion and improved education though inclusive sport and play. The project has directly helped 1,020 children with disabilities, and indirectly impacted 3,000 boys and girls. The Plan2Inclusivize Project was successfully implemented in Guinea. In 2017, it was successfully piloted in Guinea and mainstreamed into an existing education programme from 2018 to increase the enrolment of children with disabilities in school. Plan International was also involved in the development of the Guinean Inclusive Education Strategy introduced in 2019 (UN DESA, 2019).

Tanzania’s Alternative Learning and Skills Development Centres were constructed with the African Development Fund (ADF) loan and grant totalling US$32.7 million. The Centres were designed to fill the gaps in non-formal education in Zanzibar, specifically on the islands of Unguja and Pemba. The project financed equipment purchase and development of teachers’ manuals. The facilities supported a program of micro-loans to graduates of the centres for their business start-ups, under the Small Entrepreneurs Loan Facility (SELF) scheme. Over 1,000 community members (51 percent of them are women) received training in computer literacy, law and adult literacy in the Alternative Learning Centres. Graduates of the Skills Development Centres, 19 microfinance institutions and Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS) in Zanzibar benefited from the project’s Small Entrepreneurs Loan Facility (SELF). Under the SELF scheme 6,333 loans were disbursed with 70 per cent of recipients as female entrepreneurs (AfDB, 2018d).

Initiatives to Promote Health and Health Equity

The WHO states that better health is central to human happiness and well being. Good health also contributes to economic progress and poverty reduction with increased life expectancy, labour productivity and income. Over the IPoA decade, expenditure on health was largely unchanged in the LDCs at about 4.2 per cent of GDP in 2011 and 4.1 per cent of GDP in 2017 (World Bank Indicators, 2020)[31]. However, the health indicators across the LDCs improved. In 2011, the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births was 501, falling to 415 in 2017, while infant mortality was 46 per 1,000 live births in 2018, compared with a rate of 57 in 2011 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). Common contributing factors attributed to success include provision of free essential drugs to the poor and vulnerable; increasing access to health care by constructing new health care centres and implementing mobile outreach clinics and providing free healthcare schemes; and deploying

[31] Extracted from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?locations=XL

doctors to health centres in remote villages. Strong global and domestic commitments created an environment conducive to these achievements especially in the first 5 years if implementation.

The mortality rate under five decreased to 64 deaths per 1000 live births in 2018, compared with a rate of 84 in 2011 across LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2020). 16 LDCs achieved the MDG 4 target of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds or more. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Timor-Leste and Yemen. Factors behind these gains have varied but could be grouped into the following: stronger national health systems, better nutrition of children and mothers, greater access to reproductive health, expansion of immunization programmes, better health infrastructure, and improved basic health care for children and mothers (State of LDCs report, 2014).

The rate of child mortality in Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Somalia were almost doubling during the IPoA decade. Inadequate health services; diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria; and persistent child malnutrition and hunger constituted the main causes of deaths among children under five in most of these countries (State of LDCs report, 2016).

In Senegal, there have been comparable improvements in health, in particular in women's health and nutrition. Cash transfers for families in need, health coverage for every household and improved coverage for people with disabilities have improved the overall health of the population. However, more work needs to be done to achieve universal health coverage (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). The proportion of births attended by a skilled health provider increased from 51 per cent in 2012 to 74 per cent in 2018, with more than 80 per cent of deliveries taking place in a health facility. The maternal mortality rate experienced a significant drop between 2010-11 and 2017, from 392 deaths per 100,000 live births to 315 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2015 and 236 deaths in 2017. The revival of Family Planning (FP) ensured training activities, supervision, and securing / availability of contraceptive products, strengthening of staff by itinerant midwives, the strengthening of providers' capacities, the allocation of structures sanitary materials for strengthening the health of mothers and children as well as the role played by the "Badiènu Gox'' who are women volunteers who support the monitoring of maternal health in the community in the promotion of assisted delivery. Contraceptive prevalence improved from 12 per cent in 2011 to 25.4 per cent in 2018. The efforts made to reduce malaria rates such as the distribution of long-lasting mosquito nets (LLINs) have resulted in a spectacular drop in the prevalence of malaria in Senegal from 2.8 per cent in 2013 to 0.4 per cent in 2017. The percentage of households with at least one treated mosquito net increased between 2012 and 2017, from 73 per cent to 84 per cent. However, there was a decrease in 2018 with a percentage of 77 per cent. The average number of nets per household, increased from 2.8 in 2012 to 3.2 in 2018 (Senegal National Report, 2019).

In 2010, Sierra Leone launched the Free Healthcare Initiative offering free treatment for pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five years, free family planning products, provision of antiretroviral and malarial curative and preventative drugs (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). Since the government implemented the Free Healthcare Initiative, protection from malaria during pregnancy increased with the proportion of pregnant women using insecticide treated bed nets and taking preventative treatment more than doubling from 21 per cent in 2009 to 53 per cent in 2013. Immediately after the initiative began there was a sharp reduction in under five mortality rates. Levels fell from 187 deaths per 1000 live births in 2009 to 147 in 2010. Over the consecutive years, this figure continued to reduce to 126 deaths per 1000 live births in 2012. Basic antenatal became close to universal reaching 98 per cent in 2010/11. Household spending as a proportion of total expenditure reduced to 62 per cent in 2013 compared to 83 per cent in 2007. The initiative was found to be cost effective saving an estimated 561, 500 – 594, 200 life years during 2010 to 2013 at a cost in the region of $420 – 445 per life saved (Witter et al, 2016).

Bhutan's total health expenditure is at 3.8 per cent of its GDP, which is financed approximately 75 per cent by the Government. Mandated by the Constitution (Article 9, Section 21), the State has 'to provide free basic public health services in both traditional and modern medicines'. Household out-of-pocket expenditure is estimated at 25 per cent of the total health expenditure. Coverage of health facilities is extensive with 94.8 per cent of the population living within 3 hours walk from the nearest health facility, which is commendable for a country challenged with difficult terrain and scattered remote populations. Consistent efforts and investment in healthcare have resulted in the increased life expectancy to 70.2 years in 2017. Bhutan was declared polio free in 2014, and achieved measles elimination status in 2017. The infant mortality rate decreased from 47 deaths per 1000 live births in 2010 to 30 in 2012. The maternal mortality rate also significantly dropped from 255 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 86 in 2012 (Bhutan National Report, 2019)

In Nepal, the Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) are primary contact points for health information and provide services to communities. In 2016, 52,000 FCHVs were actively working across the country. FCHVs provide counselling on family planning, safe motherhood, safe abortion, immunization and disease control programmes. The Ministry of Health has established at least a Sub-health Post in each Village to provide basic health services to people. In addition, the Government strengthened the capacity of the village health workers at community level to identify and track all pregnant women to attend antenatal care to address prevailing problems (Nepal National Report, 2016). This could have contributed to the decline in maternal mortality witnessed between 2011 and 2017, of 285 to 186 per 100,000 live births (World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2020i)[32].

Implementing Social Safety Nets such as Cash Transfers to Ensure Dignity and Income for Vulnerable Populations

Social safety programmes protect families from the impact of economic shocks, natural disasters and other crises. According to the World Bank (2018) an estimated 36 per cent of the most vulnerable and poor escaped extreme poverty because of social safety net programs such as cash, in-kind transfers, social pensions public works, and school feeding programs targeted at the poor and vulnerable. The need to mitigate shocks to the well-being of particular households has prompted a move towards adopting social protection schemes in the LDCs. These typically target vulnerable groups, such as people with physical or mental disabilities, orphans, widows and the elderly. Sub-Saharan Africa countries spend an average of US$ 16 per citizen annually on safety net programs whereas in Latin America and the Caribbean this average is US$ 158 per citizen per year. In developing and transition countries, an average of 1.5 per cent of GDP is spent on safety net programs covering 2.5 billion people, among these 650 million are from the LDCs (World Bank 2018).

[32] Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=NP

The increase in spending has translated to an increase in program coverage globally. Despite progress significant gaps in program coverage persist especially in the LDCs. The extent to which safety net transfer have an impact on poverty and inequality is dependent on the programs coverage, transfer level and beneficiary incidence. To ensure universal coverage of all vulnerable persons is costly for LDCs and many rely on support from donors which poses sustainability problems, given the possibility of changes in donor priorities. Another challenge is that safety nets are not always designed as a continuous support tool to attend the needs of chronically vulnerable groups, but rather as a response to emergency situations. This reflects in part limits on a long-term, development-oriented perspective (State of LDCs report, 2016).

Data from the ILO (2017a.), shows that 28.4 per cent of Bangladesh's population is covered by social protection closely followed by 21.3 per cent in Malawi. Nepal has more than doubled public expenditure on social protection in the last 20 years (ILO, 2017). Expenditure on social protection needs to be increased in LDCs, as it is crucial for human development and achieving the SDGs. It is important in this respect to not only extend coverage but also to provide adequate benefits. The extension of comprehensive social protection to those in rural areas and the informal economy is key to promote decent work and preventing poverty (ILO, 2017).

A social protection tool that has proven beneficial in developing countries is cash transfers, which have been most widely used in emergencies and have been found to be effective. There is significant evidence that cash transfers have a multiplier effect on the local economy (Bastagli et al. 2016).

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program was established in 2005 with support from various donors. It was designed to respond to the impact of chronic drought, food insecurity and climate change on Ethiopia's poorest households in rural areas. The programme provides regular cash, food transfers and trainings to able-bodied community members willing to participate in labour-intensive public works as well as transfers to households not able to work. The programme reaches around 10 million people and chronically food insecure households in the country. The community based consultation process included the participation of women. Female-headed households were selected to receive unconditional transfers. The PSNP also supported women building their asset stock. Studies have shown that PSNP clients are more resilient to droughts and have the capacity to bounce back twice as fast as households outside of the program, for example through the significant reduction in distress sales of livestock (UN OHRLLS, 2018a).

Analysis also shows that the direct effect of payments reduces poverty by 7 per cent (World Bank, 2019). In 2017 an Urban Productive Safety Net Project was launched, in which about 400,000 Ethiopians in 11 cities were enrolled as of early 2018. 70,542 urban citizens that were living under the national poverty line have benefited from direct cash transfer through the program (Ethiopia National Report, 2019). Donors account for 100 per cent of the funding of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (State of LDCs report, 2016) which makes it vulnerable to sustainability problems, given the possibility of changes in donor priorities.

The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), public works programmes (PWPs) and the National School Meals Programme (SMP) provides direct consumption support to Malawian citizens. In 2019, the Government increased the SCTP coverage from 176,000 households to 280,000 households thereby covering all the 28 districts. Currently monthly transfers have been made to 280,000 households with funds disbursed to beneficiaries amounting to Mk 24 billion. The SMP targets public primary schools covering 2,158,428 learners. PWPs provide cash and/or in-kind support in exchange for labour from ultra-poor and poor household members. The short-term objective is to provide consumption support, whilst the longer-term objectives include increasing the resilience of participating household members by enabling them to build and create productive assets, skills and livelihoods (Malawi National Report, 2019).

Senegal's Equal Opportunity Card Program allows people living with a disability to benefit from seven benefits relating to health, rehabilitation, education, training, transport, employment and project funding. Over the 2014-2018 period, almost 50,006 people living with disabilities in 2017 compared to 2,679 in 2014 obtained the card. In 2018, the Program made it possible to enrol 25,507 holders into the family security scholarships; 19,230 holders were registered in mutual health insurance; 633 holders had free access to the transport network. This Program has been successful in making efforts to provide equal opportunities to all and leaving no one behind (Senegal National Report, 2019).

Zambia's Social Cash Transfer Program (SCT) was started in 2003 and was scaled up by the Government over the IPoA implementation period. Beneficiaries received a specified amount of money per month, paid bimonthly, and persons with disabilities received double transfers. The scheme is now being implemented in all the Districts. In 2018, against a target of 700,000, the number of households that benefited from the programme was 632,327. Out of these, 465,804 were female beneficiary households (Zambia National Report 2019).

At the beginning of September, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Djiboutian Social Affairs Secretariat (SEAS) launched a food assistance project as part of its social protection-related activities to help vulnerable families. Over 4,000 families in the poorest districts of Djibouti received monthly cash transfers via their mobile phones, which they can use to buy food. WFP is increasingly providing cash-based transfers in places where food is available in the markets, but lack of income prevents vulnerable families from accessing it (WFP, 2017)

Over the implementation period, Asian and Pacific LDCs took significant steps to expand social protection to older persons.

In Afghanistan, 120,000 elderly people are covered by social protection and safety net programs (UN SDGs, 2019b). Bhutan implemented a number of programs focused on supporting older persons. In 2012, the Royal Government established the Royal Society for Senior Citizens to engage the elderly (especially retired Government officers) in social work, using their experience to support the growth and prosperity of Bhutan. His Majesty's Senior Citizens Programme was also developed, whereby senior citizens are granted a monthly allowance to meet their basic needs. A Geriatric Care Program to promote productivity, vitality, and happiness among elderly citizens was also been introduced by the Government. (Bhutan National Report, 2019)

In 2018, after a periodic review by cabinet, a 30 percent increment was applied to payments under the Senior Citizens Scheme in 2019. As of 2018, 3 per cent of the population were in receipt of payment under the Senior Citizens Scheme. In October 2019, the Tuvalu newly elected government announced an incentive payment for the elderly under the initiative '100 Days Priorities.' The incentive will allow for once off payments to citizens at the ages of 80, 90 and 100. Despite the once of nature of the payments, this demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to bolster social protection in Tuvalu (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).

2.6 MULTIPLE CRISES AND OTHER EMERGING CHALLENGES

Increasing and Enhancing the Resilience of Communities Against Climate Change

Growing evidence suggests that climate change is affecting many LDCs, in particular small island LDCs because of their locations, as well as their limited economic, institutional, scientific and technical capacities to manage and adapt to shocks. From January 2010 to July 2013, two-thirds of the global human casualties associated with climate-related events occurred in the LDCs (IIED, 2013a), although they have just over one-tenth of world population.

LDCs are taking ownership of national resilience initiatives to deliver extended support to the poor and climate-vulnerable people, including climate and social protection schemes such as Kiribati Action Program (KAP) in Kiribati. In Sao Tome and Principe, infrastructure support is provided for small-scale voluntary relocation for coastal communities to areas that will not be exposed to future climate hazards. Some LDCs are making investments in physical infrastructure such as coastal storm drainage infrastructure in Tanzania, typhoon-resilient buildings in Madagascar and mainstreaming adaptation into rural road building to avoid flooding in Cambodia (LDC Climate, 2019).

Afghanistan adopted the Climate Change Adaptation Project (CCAP). The project aims to provide livelihood options to help manage the risks of climate change events and increase the technical capacities of farmers and local economic development. Under the CCAP, there was construction of 22 protection walls, 16 water reservoirs and 26 water intakes. 25 kariz channels were restored and 22 greenhouses and 50 kitchen gardens were established. A dairy production and processing centre in Uruzgan, a fruit processing centre in Panjshir, and a jam and pickle processing centre in Uruzgan were constructed. To improve preparedness and resilience of rural communities against climate-induced disaster risks emergency shelters, protection walls, 7 water reservoirs and an aqueduct were constructed. The Project supported a total of 6,395 direct beneficiaries, and created employment opportunities to 60 women (Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, 2019b).

To enhance resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change and improve adaptive capacity of vulnerable Somali communities and the ecosystems on which they depend, a 3-year project from 1st Jan 2015 - 1st Dec 2018 was implemented. The project was the first ever to construct a sand dam in Somalia during the IPoA period and assisted the Government through the process of broad-based stakeholder consultations, analysis and consensus building to create ownership of the policies at various levels of government, within civil society and by the communities that are directly affected by the policy outcomes. In addition, the project worked with communities to develop plans for resource management and support in analyzing and mitigating risks of conflict with surrounding communities and users. In close cooperation with civil society organizations, private sector and academia, several workshops and training on climate change adaptation, early warning systems and capacity building were conducted and targeted at government officials and vulnerable communities. Over 19,453 women have developed and or increased their awareness and knowledge of climate risks and adaptation responses. Additionally, 8,426 female headed households have improved access to water and livelihoods. In addition, 1,313 people benefited from short term jobs, through the construction of water harvesting structures and ecosystem-based adaptation infrastructures in the Southern Central Regions of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland. The project also conducted several workshops to improve awareness within the vulnerable communities including elders and women to strengthen coping mechanisms for climate change impact in the community and supported the national government including line ministries and disaster mandated institutions to prepare long term responsive strategies to climate change impact. The project substantially improved access and availability of water to vulnerable communities such as women, youth and the elderly in the pilot districts by construction of innovative medium scale water infrastructures. This innovative way of capturing the rain water and letting it seep into the wells for use during dry spells has been awarded as best practice by the Government of Puntland (UN SDGs, 2019).

Constructing Extensive Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure Including Early Warning Systems

During the period 2010–2019, the LDCs continued to suffer devastating impacts from natural hazards, including cyclones, hurricanes, landslides, flooding, earthquakes and drought. Disasters often expand public debt by triggering more borrowing for recovery and reconstruction. They also divert funding from investment made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Istanbul Programme of Action's goals and objectives. The damage and losses from climate-related disasters have increased in severity over time. For example, in 2019, Idai was one of the strongest known cyclones to make landfall on the east coast of Africa. In addition, people in the LDCs are, on average, six times more likely to be injured, lose their home, be displaced or evacuated, or require emergency assistance than those in high-income countries. Economic losses due to disasters are also disproportionately higher in the LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Early warning is a major element in disaster risk reduction. Early warning systems help to reduce economic losses and mitigate the number of deaths or injuries from a disaster by providing information ahead of the disaster allowing individuals to protect their lives and property or escape the hazardous area.

During Cyclone Pam that hit Vanuatu in 2015, short text messages to alert the population were sent at three-hour intervals, and then hourly as the cyclone came nearer. This allowed the population to take the necessary preventive measures. The flow of meteorological and remote sensing data into Vanuatu's ICT network was critical for early warning and saving lives despite the severe destruction caused by the cyclone (UN-OHRLLS, 2018).

Bangladesh has become a global role model in Disaster management capacity. As a disaster prone country it has built endogenous techniques and solutions to mitigate the adverse effect and impact of natural disasters. Technical and financial assistance in the disaster management under the auspices of the Disaster Management Bureau has supported the building of several flagship projects that have saved lives, improved resilience and has become a hallmark of success that has won global recognition, such as the prestigious UN Sasakawa Award for disaster risk reduction in 2013 and UN RISK Award for coastal resilience. The Multi-purpose Cyclone shelter built across the disaster prone areas, especially those that are more vulnerable to hydro meteorological events are extremely effective in saving lives and property while utilized for other community uses during non emergency period. In particular, early warning systems, and the establishment of cyclone shelters (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

The Disaster Management Act was passed in 2012 by the Government of Bangladesh. The Act facilitates a more coordinated, objective driven and strong disaster management system. During 2008-2016, 255 flood and cyclone shelters and 7,934 resilient houses were constructed. Data suggests that preparation for and response to disasters has improved over time for technological advancement and better disaster preparedness. During 2010-15, a total of 107 cyclone shelters were constructed in 13 coastal districts. In 2018-19, the Government built 11604 resilient houses and 23000 resilient houses will be built in the current fiscal year (2019-20). In 2011 -14, the Ministry of Disaster Management Relief (MoDMR) procured a number of 7,496 equipment for search and rescue operations related to earthquakes and other disasters. An Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system was initiated to promote awareness on disaster-related information. The IVR can be accessed through any mobile phone and provides information such as weather updates, cyclone warnings, and information for sea-going fishermen. The Disaster Management Information Centre (DMIC) has also been established to disseminate disaster related information and early warnings. Measures have been taken to send disaster alerts through SMS to the Union Information Service Center from the DMIC (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

The socio-economic progress achieved by Nepal since the adoption of the IPoA was significantly derailed by the earthquakes of 2015. According to the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Report, one-third of the population was impacted severely, which pushed about 3 per cent of the population below the poverty line (NPC, 2015). More than half a million homes and 19,000 classrooms were destroyed. There was widespread disruption of water supply, sanitation and health facilities. Since 2015, most of the damaged properties have been reconstructed. To help mitigate risk from future natural disasters, Nepal has enacted Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act 2017. The Act focuses on coordination and management of all activities pertaining to disaster management, disaster risk reduction, disaster recuperation and disaster response, as well as monitoring and mitigation measures on climate change. The Government has implemented the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2018 and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan (2018-2019) for policy intervention and programmatic implementation of the Act. Following legislation, policy guidelines have also been adopted at the local level to incorporate disaster risk management in local government development plans. Catastrophe-Deferred Drawdown Option (CAT-DDO) operation supports further reforms in reducing risks from natural disasters (Nepal National Report, 2019).

Applying the Model of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites to Promote Peace in the Lake Chad Basin through the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (BIOPALT) Project, aims to provide a multisectoral response by UNESCO to the issues of safeguarding Lake Chad, promoting peace and reducing poverty. The Lake Chad Basin is an important source of freshwater for more than 40 million people living in the four countries surrounding it: Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, and Nigeria. To provide solutions for the Lake Chad Basin, a financing agreement was signed between UNESCO and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in 2017 to fund the BIOPLAT project. This project is a component of the Program to Rehabilitate and Strengthen the Resilience of Lake Chad Basin Systems (PRESIBALT), funded by the African Development Bank. The funding agreement covers the project’s implementation over a three-year period for a total of $6,456,000 via a multi-sectoral and multidimensional approach. The BIOPALT project will concretely provide early warning systems for droughts and floods to strengthen the resilience capacities of local communities to climate change (SDG 13), train 300 policymakers, scientists and community leaders and mobilize 30,000 lake residents for the peaceful management of natural resources and water (SDGs 6 and 15), to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems such as ponds, oases and flood plains (SDG 15), to implement income-generating activities based on green economy to improve the livelihoods of local communities (SDGs 1, 8) and to promote transboundary inscription of the lake as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site (UN SDGs, 2019b)[33].

Emerging issues: Health Crisis and Covid 19 Coronavirus Disease

During the IPoA period, LDCs have been faced with two global health pandemics. In 2014, African LDCs (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea) were worst hit by the Ebola Outbreak. With 22,859 reported cases and a total of 9,162 deaths the 2014 Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa is the longest, largest, deadliest, and the most complex in history (UNDP, 2015). The cost of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa is estimated to have been an estimated US$53 billion (Huber et al, 2018). In 2020, Covid-19 is a new threat that has emerged bringing uncertainty to the global trading system, devastation to the tourism industry and a heavy strain on the inadequate healthcare systems in LDCs, majorly impacting their paths towards sustainable development.

As of mid-November 2020, 45 LDCs had reported positive cases of Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), with a total of 879,638 confirmed cases, (with 443,434 from Bangladesh alone) and a total number of 15,157 deaths. In general, LDCs account for a small but rising per cent of global cases and and global deaths. These low figures in comparison to global averages may not be an accurate reflection of the reality, as a low rate of reported infections can also be a consequence of LDCs' inadequate testing capacity. Of the 41 LDCs reporting cases, 33 countries have now confirmed local transmission (Johns Hopkins University, 2020)[34].

The global COVID-19 pandemic poses new risks to the outlook of the LDCs development. Implementing the basic precautionary measures is challenging for the LDCs. Frequent washing of hands which seems so basic to the majority is impossible for many people in LDCs with poor access to clean running water as a challenge. Across the world, many countries have entered lockdown to suppress the spread of the infectious disease, with many people working from home. Given the difference in jobs dynamics as most LDCs have large informal economies and the lack of ICT infrastructure working from home is not an option for the majority in LDCs. Lockdown also requires increased access to social protection programs, access to a large pool of domestic savings or funding to ensure the vulnerable population are not affected by other issues such as increasing poverty, hunger and destitution as a result of not being able to work. Even milder forms of social distancing are very difficult to implement in LDCs particularly in slums and refugee camps, where people live in close proximity. Extended school closures could have more drastic effects on human capital, particular for girls and young women, and therefore future economic growth due to the impossibility of remote schooling. LDCs lack adequate health care systems and resources. There are on average only 113 hospital beds per 100,000 inhabitants in LDCs, less than half the number in other developing countries and around 80 per cent below developed countries. LDCs also lack the productive capacity and financial resources to obtain necessary health equipment, they need immediate support from the international community, in addition to support for the long-term strengthening of the health sector (UN/DESA, 2020)

COVID-19 is a fast-evolving situation that will have both human and economic implications. Successful integration into the global economy brought many LDCs closer towards graduation from the LDC category, through tourism, light manufacturing, remittances from workers abroad and

[33] See also https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=29606

[34] https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/covid-19-and-the-ldcs.html

revenue from oil and other commodity exports. With the increasing number of LDCs using trade and services as an engine for growth, the expected collapse in world trade could have a lasting impact, as most LDC economies rely on external demand.

Manufacturing, in particular of garments, has been a main development driver for LDCs approaching graduation, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, or Myanmar. Covid-19 has already caused a demand shock through significant cancellation of orders as fashion retail in developed countries collapsed. Simultaneously, supply has reduced with the mandatory factory closures. at the end of March 2020, a quarter of the 4 million mostly female Bangladeshi garment workers had been fired or furloughed. In the first half of April 2020, garments exports from Bangladesh declined by more than 80 per cent on a year-to-year basis. Tourism is the main export of many LDCs, particularly small island developing States (SIDS).

Travel restrictions and advisories by authorities in foreign tourist markets, as well as the income loss of consumers in these markets, have reduced demand. Reduced demand for migrant workers and travel bans imposed by receiving or sending countries will drastically reduce remittances, which are essential in many LDCs. The return of migrant workers who have lost their jobs due to the crisis abroad can put further stress on limited social protection and health systems. Oil exporting LDCs are additionally affected by disagreement among major oil exporting countries on how to stabilize prices, with recent oil prices plunging 50 per cent. Prices for most metals and minerals have declined by 20 per cent, slashing export earnings and potentially reducing foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows. Pre-existing debt problems could become worse due to the strengthening of foreign currencies in which external debt of LDCs is denominated. Currently, the pandemic is an economic and social crises, if it becomes financial with a global recession, it could take LDCs years to recover. Evidence from the 2008 global financial crisis indicates that it took more than five years for LDCs, particularly small island LDCs, to recover from the then completely external demand shocks (UN/DESA, 2020).

Since April, authorities and governments across the LDCs have taken swift action to contain the outbreak. Closure of all educational institutions (Ethiopia), bans on all public gatherings with more than 300 people (Mozambique) and suspension of all international flights (Djibouti) are a few of the measures that were initially implemented. In Rwanda, cabinet ministers and tops officials have donated their April salaries to support the cost of fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The Government is also distributing food to the most vulnerable citizens who rely on daily income to survive (BBC News Africa, 2020).

Development partners have also been assisting LDCs in the fight against COVID-19. WHO and UNDP are helping countries to prepare for, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP is already working to support health systems in Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar (UNDP, 2020). The IMF approved a $109 million loan to Rwanda to help tackle the spread of coronavirus. The World Bank approved a fast-track $100 million financing to help Bangladesh prevent, detect, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen its national systems for public health emergencies (World Bank, 2020a).

There has also been a rise in entrepreneurial and scientific innovation amongst citizens and researchers. Two students from the University of Uganda have developed a hands-free hand washing device to promote safe hygiene and save water during the COVID -19 pandemic (BBC News

Africa, 2020). In Senegal, a team of researchers have begun validation trials on a COVID-19 diagnostic test that can be used at home producing results in as little as 10 minutes for the cost for $1. The plan is to manufacture the tests in Senegal and the United Kingdom with potential distribution across Africa as early as June 2020 (Al Jazeera, 2020).

The effect of the pandemic on the LDCs will have major implications on the last efforts to achieve the IPoA goals. It threatens to undo progress achieved towards sustainable development by the LDCs over recent decades. Even before the current crisis, LDCs were unlikely to achieve the SDGs. With weak health infrastructures, high poverty levels and poor housing and sanitation in many of the LDCs, any significant outbreak will prove challenging for the countries to address. At this point, LDCs need support to assess the potential economic impact of the pandemic, which will depend on the extent and duration of the shock. Domestic government revenues, exports, investment flows and remittances will likely be negatively affected. Strong support from the international community will be critical in helping LDCs address and minimize the impact of the shock of the pandemic. Support from development partners is crucial as stated by the DRC who faced threats to economic stability due to the 2014 Ebola Outbreak (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

2.7 MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In the national reports, many of the LDCs expressed concern that much of their efforts to implement their national development plans/agendas were hindered by a lack of finance – either internally or externally. Mobilizing sufficient financing remains a major challenge in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite signs of progress, investments that are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remain underfunded (United Nations, 2018a).

The gap between investment needs and available finance in the LDCs is still large. Official development assistance (ODA) to the LDCs from members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development increased from $44.7 billion in 2011 to $45.9 billion in 2018, reflecting a decline in real terms and a shift from grants to loans. The share of total ODA allocated to the LDCs declined from 33 per cent in 2011 to 31 per cent in 2018. During the same period, the average share of gross national income provided as ODA to the LDCs from Development Assistance Committee donors declined from 0.1 to 0.09 per cent (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

The share of global FDI inflows targeting LDCs has increased from 1.3 per cent with a value of $20 billion in 2011 to 1.8 per cent with a value of $24 billion in 2018. During the IPoA period, FDI inflows to LDCs have reached their peak in 2015 with $38 billion (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex). Still in 2016, both ODA and remittances were larger than FDI inflows to the LDCs. The challenges faced with respect to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action include how to incentivize greater investment, and how to ensure that it is long-term and aligned with sustainable development and reaches those most in need. The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is also dependent on private investment in LDCs, where capital markets are less developed and investment profiles riskier (United Nations, 2018a)

Wide Range of Tax Efforts to Mobilise Domestic Resources

Over the IPoA implementation period, more than half of the LDCs had increasing revenue trends: 60 per cent of LDCs saw year-on-year improvements in tax revenue-to-GDP ratios in 2017, with an average gain of nearly 1 percentage point in the 27 countries (United Nations, 2019). The median ratio in LDCs increased only slightly from 13.8 per cent in 2011 to 15.8 per cent in 2017 which partly reflects revenues from the introduction of a value added tax in several LDCs. This increase reflects both increases in the ratio of African and Asia-Pacific LDCs who reported a median ratio of 14.5 and 17.13 respectively (World Bank Indicators, 2020)[35]. To improve tax administration, 10 of the LDCs are participating in the Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Development Programme, which aims to enable sharing of tax audit knowledge and skills in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Mobilising domestic savings is still a challenge for LDCs.

Median gross domestic savings increased slightly from 11.4 per cent in 2011 to 13.5 per cent in 2018, reflecting higher incomes and improvements in the domestic financial sector of some LDCs. Fintech is likely to have contributed to financial inclusion in Bangladesh and Mali (UNOHRLLS, 2020). Savings are partly constrained by the underdeveloped domestic financial sector. In the LDCs only 27 per cent of adults have bank accounts (UN OHRLLS, 2018a).

Uganda is committed to increasing its tax to GDP ratio in order to finance its development agenda. The reforms saw a significant increase in net tax revenue collection by more than tenfold, from UGX 1,212 billion in 2001/02 to approximately UGX 12,719 billion in 2016/17. Over the IPoA implementation period (FY 2014/15 - FY2019/20) tax has been growing at an average of 17% increasing from UGX 3,117 billion in FY2007/08 to UGX 14,403 billion in FY 2017/18 while tax to GDP ratio has been growing at an average of 0.2%. To enhance Uganda's revenue and raise the ratio of revenue to GDP ratio to 18% over a 5 year period, the government developed the Domestic Revenue Mobilization Strategy. The Strategy reviews tax policies for greater simplicity and efficiency, increases tax payer involvement in tax policy formulation, and eliminates revenue leakages and enforcing tax obligations.

In Mauritania, tax reforms since 2015 have broadened the tax base and strengthened tax administration, thus increasing tax revenue from 2015 to 2018 to more than 10 per cent. Mauritania has experienced a rapid and significant increase in tax revenue collection over the past years. The ratio of tax revenues (excluding those from natural resources) to GDP improved by more than 50 per cent since 2010, reaching an estimated 22 per cent of GDP in 2013. Corporate Income Tax (CIT) doubled to 4 per cent. Payroll tax and VAT increased by about 60 per cent. This increase does not

[35] Extracted from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.TAX.TOTL.GD.ZS

include revenues associated with extractive industries. The amount of tax revenues generated by mining activities reached 5 per cent of GDP in 2013. Mauritania-specific factors largely explain the increase in revenue collection. For example, the rise of CIT can be explained by the end of the CIT exemption in 2012 and by the end of the minimum tax revenue (2.5 per cent on turnover) collected by customs. CIT revenues rose by 1.3 per cent of GDP to 3.7 per cent in 2012, while minimum tax revenue increased from 0.8 per cent to 1.4 per cent of GDP. While the latter tax is similar to a royalty at 2.5 per cent, it is creditable against the CIT and collected by customs. This point is important because it reinforces the coordination between the ministries of finance and mining, and improves the quality of valuation of exported minerals (IMF, 2015b).

2015 marked the year of Afghanistan's revenue turnaround from stagnation and decline in 2013-14 to a nearly 22 per cent increase in total budgetary revenue by 2015. The turnaround was reflected by better collection efforts and new tax measures. In 2015, the government introduced new tax measures including doubling the Business Receipts Tax (BRT) from 2 to 4 per cent, increasing levies on imported fuel and gas, a 10 per cent tax on mobile phone top ups and an increase in the overflight fee for commercial airliners. Although some of these measures were not popular and political will and outreach on the part of the government were required to get them passed by Parliament, they had an estimated positive impact on revenue of Afs 5.1 billion (23.5 per cent of the total increase in revenue. 56.2 per cent of the total revenue increase in 2015 reflected a stronger revenue mobilization effort and more efficient tax collection. 40.6 per cent of the total increase in revenue was from collection of arrears and one off payments, amounting to Afs 8.8 billion. This experience demonstrates that targeted progress can be achieved even in challenging political and security environments such as in Afghanistan (USIP, 2016)

Effective and efficient domestic resource mobilization and utilization have been the priority focus of the Ethiopian government in the last decade. The government ensured that global goals such as the IPOA and SDGs were mainstreamed into the national development plan so that they could be financed by the national budget like other domestic initiatives. The government has been working to improve the tax revenue of the country through modernizing the tax system, improving tax policy and tax collection systems. This has been done to tap the revenue from the rapidly growing economy. Other efforts to pool domestic resources are being pursued including promoting saving culture among the people at large, (educating, motivating); expanding financial institutions and services; improving interest rates; expanding private and public social security coverage and utilizing saving facilities like savings for housing, selling bonds etc. Since implementing these reforms, total land revenue increased from Birr 69.1 billion in 2010/11 to Birr 269.6 billion in 2017/18. Domestic saving as a percent of GDP has also been increasing from a very low 7.4% in 2010/11 to 24.5 percent in 2017/18. However, tax revenue as percent of GDP has been witnessing ups and downs and remained almost the same at 10.7% in 2017/18 despite the fact that tax revenue increased from 59 billion birr in 2010/11 to 235.2 billion birr in 2017/18. This denotes that domestic resource mobilization particularly tax revenue is not keeping pace with the rapid growth of the economy which further evidences that the existing potential for tax revenue is not being fully exploited (Ethiopia National Report,2019)

Mobilising External Financial Resources

ODA makes up over two thirds of external finance for least-developed countries. Net bilateral aid from DAC donors to LDCs declined by 2.7 per cent in real terms, to $27.6 billion in 2018 (United Nations, 2019). Less ODA is going to least-developed and African countries, where it is most needed. Nine members of the Development Assistance Committee witnessed aid to the LDCs decrease from 2015 to 2016. In 2018, the number of donors that provide 0.15 per cent or more of their gross national income (GNI) as ODA to the LDCs in line with the targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action and Sustainable Development Goal 17 was five, similarly to 2017 (Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), with all of them exceeding 0.20 per cent of GNI. Donor countries are not living up to their 2015 pledge to ramp up development finance and which negatively effects the ability of LDCs to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals[36].

International investment, in particular FDI is important in helping LDCs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It can be a powerful international mechanism for mobilising the tangible and intangible assets (such as capital, technology, skills and access to markets) that are essential for sustainable development and growth. FDI serves as a complement to domestic investment and capacity building for the growth and development of the LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2015 strengthening investment promotion regimes)

Average FDI flows to the LDCs as a group amounted to US$20 billion in 2011 and increased to US$24 billion in 2018 with a peak of $38 billion in 2015 .While in 2011 1.3 per cent of the global FDI inflows were targeted to the group of LDCs, this figure increased to 1.8 per cent in 2018. The top 5 recipients – Bangladesh, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Cambodia and Mozambique accounted for over two thirds of these flows in 2018 (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

Aggregate FDI flows to African LDCs dropped by 24 per cent with major contractions in Angola and Mozambique from 2011 to 2018. By contrast, FDI to the Asia-Pacific LDCs increased by 193 per cent in absolute terms amounting for 0.9 per cent of global FDI inflows in 2018, up from 0.3 per cent in 2011. This increase was driven by Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar who together cover almost 90 per cent of FDI inflows to Asia-Pacific LDCs in 2018. Contrary to the increase of the share of global FDI inflows to Asia-Pacific LDCs, the share reaching African LDCs has decreased over the IPoA period. After a peak in 2014 with a share of 1.63 percent, the share of global FDI inflows arriving in African LDCs deteriorated to a low of 0.63 per cent in 2017 and slightly recovered in 2018 to 0.93 per cent (UNOHRLLS, 2020 statistical annex).

Bangladesh increased flows by setting up Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) in 2016, with the aim to attract and retain foreign as well as local investments that are conducive to attaining economic development. To attract FDI from strategic sources, BIDA has conducted road

[36] See also https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-17/
and https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23642BN_LDCs_LLDCs.pdf

shows, summits and other forms of promotion activities, including both overseas and local networking and matchmaking sessions, based on sectors prioritized in the Industrial Policy 2016. The expansion of Bangladesh's economy within and its integration with the rest of the world has increased due to such activities. Bangladesh's FDI net inflows reached $3.61 billion in 2018, an increase of over 68 per cent from US$2.1 billion received in the previous year despite a 13 per cent fall in global FDI. The government has been developing physical, legal and technological infrastructure for stimulating private FDI to secure external financing for private investment as envisioned in the 7th Five Year Plan. Breaking previous records, gross FDI inflow reached $4.5 billion. According to UNCTAD, Bangladesh was leading the LDCs in the Asia and Oceania in the FDI inflows in 2018 (Bangladesh National Report, 2019)

Managing Debt Levels

External indebtedness remains a crucial issue in LDCs with an external debt stock increasing from $199 billion to $358 billion from 2011 to 2018. The respective shares of African and Asia-Pacific LDCs contributing to the overall external debt burden across LDCs has remained constant during the IPoA period with African LDCs accounting for roughly two thirds of the external debt stock. Between 2011 and 2018, the average external debt stock in the LDCs increased from 26.4 per cent to 34.5 per cent of GNI. African LDCs were the driver of this increase with an average external debt stock 43.2 per cent of GNI, up from 29.7 per cent of GNI in 2011. Asia-Pacific LDCs managed to keep their external debt in terms of GNI constant in the range from 22 to 24 per cent of GNI. (World Bank Indicators, 2020)[37]. Levels of external indebtedness increased to an even greater extent the burden of debt services (measured as interest payments relative to exports of goods and services and primary income). Total debt service as a percentage of exports of goods, services and primary income has increased from 4.9 per cent in 2011 to 10.2 per cent in 2017. This increase was largely driven by African LDCs whose total debt service increased from a share of 5.0 per cent in 2011 to 13.5 per cent in 2017 peaking at 15.3 per cent in 2016.

In 1996, the World Bank and IMF launched the HIPC Initiative to create a framework in which all creditors (including multilateral creditors) can provide debt relief to the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries to ensure debt sustainability and reduce the constraints on economic growth and poverty reduction. In 2018, the IMF and the World Bank's International Development Association determined that Somalia had taken the necessary steps to become the 37th country to reach the HIPC Decision Point and begin receiving debt relief under the HIPC initiative. Under this initiative, Somalia's debt will be irrevocably reduced from US$ 5.2 billion at end of 2018 to US$ 557 million in net present value terms (NPV) once it reaches completion point. As one of Somalia's key development partners, the EU will provide 43 million euros to help clear Somalia's arrears to international financial institutions (EU, 2020). To reach the HIPC Completion Point, Somalia is committed to main-streaming macroeconomic stability, implementing a poverty reduction strategy, and putting in place reforms focused on fiscal stability, improving governance and debt management, strengthening social conditions and supporting inclusive growth. This decision allows Somalia to fully re-engage with International Financial Institutions. According to the Prime Minister

[37] extracted from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.DOD.DECT.GN.ZS

of the Federal Government of Somalia, Mr Hassan Ali Khayre, “the decision is an important milestone which presents ample opportunities for Somali as it relentlessly pursues its ongoing reform processes as well as its recovery and development agenda” (IMF, 2020).

Guinea also reached HIPC completion point during the IPoA period. The Government pursued a prudent debt policy to avoid aggravating the debt burden through the adoption and implementation of a debt policy based on the search for resources loan on concessional terms and by strengthening of negotiation and debt management capacities. This led to the cancellation of two thirds of the country's external debt stock, 2.1 billion US Dollars, as well as the signing of the 10th EDF Agreement.

Growing Importance of Remittances to LDCs: Implementing Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks for Effective Diaspora/Migrant Remittance Management

LDCs experienced a stark increase in their remittance flows from $29.8 billion in 2011 to $53.1 billion in 2019. Asia-Pacific LDCs have mainly contributed to this growth with a current share of approximately 70 per cent of all remittances to LDCs. The share of global migrant remittance inflows reaching LDCs has slightly increased from 5.8 per cent to 7.4 per cent. Remittances as a share of GDP were above 20 per cent in 4 LDCs in 2019 (Haiti, South Sudan, Nepal and Lesotho) (World Bank, 2020c). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank projects that remittances will fall by 20 per cent in 2020 and recover with an increase of 5.6 per cent in 2020. The decline is expected to be around 13 per cent in the East Asia and the Pacific region threatening household incomes especially in remittance-dependent Pacific islands. In Sub-Saharan Africa, remittances are projected to decline by 23.1 per cent to $37 billion in 2020 and recover by 4 per cent in 2021 (World Bank, 2020b). Migrant remittances are not only a development finance mechanism but also a source of currency for LDCs. As a financing mechanism, these funds allow the recipient household to invest in education, health, building fixed capital or creating new businesses. At the national level, remittances allow replenishment of the central bank's cash in the currency and thereby contribute to the stability of the national currency.

Although the LDCs share of remittances is only 6.9 per cent of the world total, remittances are a significant source of external finance for several countries. Six countries (Bangladesh, Haiti, Nepal, Senegal, Uganda and Yemen) accounted for three quarters of total remittance flows to the LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2018). During the IPoA review period, in Nepal remittances have been the major sources of augmenting the national saving capacity and are helping to maintain financial stability in the banking system (Nepal National Report, 2019). In Comoros, migrant remittances represent 25 per cent of the country's GDP (Comoros National Report, 2019). Remittances play a big role as a growing source of foreign funds for Uganda. They have led to improvement in household incomes and subsequently livelihoods. In 2011, the inflow of remittances reduced the poverty headcount by 11 per cent (Uganda National Report, 2019). In Burkina Faso, workers' remittances and employee compensation represented on average 2.93 per cent of GDP between 2011-2018. These remittances are an essential means in poverty reduction policy and at the macroeconomic level, the transfers of funds have a positive impact on the balance of payments (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019).

According to the World Bank Report on Madagascar, between 2011 and 2018, these fund types amounted to $ 2,183.9 million, or 48.5 per cent of the total ODA covering this same period. As of

2018, its proportion relative to GDP is 2.1 per cent and is equivalent to 21 days of importation. (Madagascar National Report, 2019).

Remittances in Malawi are an important component of resources required for economic growth as they are invested in infrastructure and other projects that would otherwise have required loans (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). Through its Reserve Bank, Malawi has embarked on a drive to engage Malawians in the diaspora and to put in place a database of these people to increase remittances. As a result, in 2018 Malawi received USD 186.0 million in remittances from USD 38 million received in 2017 (Malawi National Report, 2019).

Performance in terms of remittances over the review period continued on a positive trajectory in Zambia. To harness the potential of the diaspora, the Zambian Government in April 2019 adopted the Diaspora Policy to create an effective framework for engaging the Zambian Diaspora. Among the policy objectives is the promotion, facilitation and leverage of remittances as well as lowering costs of sending remittances by the diaspora. The value of remittances increased from US$ 46.2 million in 2011 to US$106.97 in 2018, though with a steep dip in 2016 at US$ 38.46 million. Another important objective was the provision for dual citizenship for Zambians, in accordance with the 2016 Constitution, including children born in the Diaspora, and re-acquisition of citizenship for Zambians who had lost or renounced their citizenship. It is hoped that with the implementation of these measures, the level of remittances should improve even further going forward (Zambia National Report, 2019).

Over the period of the IPoA, the volume of remittances in Senegal increased from 592.7 billion FCFA in 2011 to 764.1 billion FCA in 2014 and settled at 1 317.6 billion CFA in 2018. Various studies have shown that most transfers are used to finance household consumption or education and healthcare. Remittances have been key to reducing poverty in Senegal. So much so that families in rural areas will send a family member out of the country as an investment. Figures show that a 10% increase in the ratio of transfers to GDP corresponds to a 1% decrease in people living on less than $ 1 a day and in the poverty gap rate. Approximately 69.8 per cent of financial flows from migration are mainly intended to support and cover household consumption of the family members who remain in place. Investment in the productive sectors represents only 7.6 of migrant remittances. To better utilize remittances, the government needs to invest remittances into country development treasury financing instruments (Senegal National Report, 2019).

There are three major challenges that governments must overcome to increase the flow of remittances are transfer costs, speed and safety. The Government of Guinea is making efforts to lower transfer costs, increase transfer speed and guarantee safe transfers (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). With the support of development partners, UNDP (TOKTEN Project), Morocco (SME Development), and France (Mobilization and capacity building of NGOs and civil society actors), the Government of Guinea has set up partnership facilities in favour of the diaspora. This includes an effective mechanism to better mobilize the resources of the Guinean diaspora and to channel their transfers towards productive investments, reduced costs, improved speeds and security of collection and transfers and the establishment of a one-stop shop for the development of SMEs (with the prospect of creating a diaspora bank) has been set up (Guinea National Report, 2019).

According to the World Bank Report (2016), the volume of migrant transfers to Benin was estimated at more than 302 million US dollars in 2015 and from mainly 22 countries. To improve access to financial and banking services in order to facilitate the transaction of remittances, several products have been developed by the primary banks in Benin. The special diaspora account which gives access to a special bank card, the diaspora card and the diaspora cheque book was set up by ECOBANK. Societe Generale des Banque du Bénin (SGBB) has developed an i-transfer for sending funds to Benin by phone as soon as the migrant has an account in Benin. The diaspora savings account (Diaspora France, Diaspora ECOWAS) was set up by the Atlantic Bank of Benin.

La Poste du Bénin has developed products such as the Diaspora Savings Account which enables direct transfers between major banks in France and affiliated banks in Benin. The account requires issuance of a mandate or power of attorney for withdrawal from an account. Competition between different firms in the money transfer market has helped to reduce costs of remittance transfers. The development of bi-banking, has enabled banking and financial operations to be carried out in the countries of origin from the place of residence in order to promote financial inclusion. Remote banking through mobile phone payments has also eased the facilitation of transfers. At the regional level, the African Institute for Fund Transfers, a specialized technical office of the African Union has been created and operational since 2015 with the idea of exploring transfers of funds for development in Africa, reducing the cost of sending money to and from Africa, improving the regulatory and policy frameworks for remittances, including systems for measuring, compiling and reporting remittances (Benin National Report, 2019).

Since 2012, remittances constitute The Gambia's most influential source of development finance inflow. The Gambia ranks second to Liberia in the ECOWAS region, receiving 26.1 per cent of GDP from remittances. While the value of remittances is high and it has been an important source of external funds to help recipient households, the country has not focused on identifying opportunities to also leverage it for development finance. As a result, remittances finance present consumption, and does not contribute to towards long-term capital expenditures such as major infrastructure projects. Key enabling factors such as the lack of capital markets and targeted programmes are major hindrances. To take appropriate measures to better utilize knowledge, skills and earnings of the returning migrants and to ensure remittances are better organised and restructured, the government established the "Diaspora Fund" and a "Diaspora Bond" to maximise use of remittances (Gambia National Report, 2019).

In 2016, the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (RMA) launched Remit Bhutan, to provide a platform for Non-Resident Bhutanese to remit their savings and earnings to Bhutan through the formal banking channels. The target to reach a USD 1 million was achieved within 8 months. Between 2016 and 2017, inward remittances grew by nearly 55 per cent and as of September 2018 inward remittance valued at USD 9.6 million. The Royal Government and the RMA remain committed to continuously improving the Remit Bhutan services (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

To formalise migrant work, the Solomon Islands Government under the Department of Employment joined Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP). This programme connects Solomon Islands workers with Australian employers experiencing labour shortages, typically in rural and remote areas. This benefits both parties and the average worker remits around $5,000-$6,000 during a six-month placement. Solomon Islands participation in the SWP doubled to 175 in 2017-18 and increased to 314 in 2018-2019. The Programme supports ongoing work to train, prepare and support increased numbers of future workers. In September 2018, Solomon Islands joined the

Pacific Labour Scheme. The scheme will enable Solomon Islanders to undertake low and semi-skilled work in rural and regional Australia for up to three years (Solomon Islands National Report, 2019).

In March 2015, the Shoprite cross-border money transfer service was launched in Lesotho to enable Basotho living in South Africa to send money to and from Lesotho. Since then the Loti volume of transfers through this service have increased by an impressive 10 % between 2015 and 2018. In the first part of 2019, remittances received through the Shoprite and Mobile Money transfers were about US$13 million. Given the increasing number of Basotho working in South Africa, this service is likely to continue increasing remittances, which play a part in countering the declining Southern African Customs Union (SACU) receipts (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

Remittances are one of the major sources of foreign exchange in the Liberian economy. These remittances are the major source of livelihood for about 45 percent of Liberians who are unemployed. To take appropriate measures to better utilize knowledge, skills and earnings of the returning migrants. The Central Bank of Liberia instituted an inward remittance policy which requires 25 per cent of remittance to be converted to the Liberian dollars. This policy was used to provide the Central Bank of Liberia with foreign exchange liquidity. Prior to this policy, the full amount of inward remittances were paid in United States Dollars (Liberia National Report, 2019).

Box 4: Easing the transfer of remittances: Case of Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Electronic Funds Transfer Network (BEFTN) was established on 28 February 2011 in order to ensure swift delivery of remittances to beneficiaries through bank-to-bank clearing systems. Mobile network providers and microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Bangladesh collaborated to deliver remittances from migrant workers to recipients in remote rural households. To mitigate the burden of increased expenses in sending foreign remittance and to encourage bringing in foreign remittances through legal channels, the Government announced in the 2019-20 budget that the remitters would get 2% incentive on their remitted money. In 2014, to speed up processing times, the government advised all bank branches to provide remittances to beneficiaries of their clients within maximum two working days instead of 72 hours.

To encourage female participation in overseas employment, the government has taken some initiatives like training programs and ensuring safe work environment, resulting in 70 Technical Training Centres (TTC) at district level have been set up across the country and a Safe Home was created by WEWF for women expatriates in Saudi Arabia and Oman if they feel their lives risky in abroad and return home in safe. The government has provided collateral free loans for the expatriates and rehabilitation and project loans for returnee migrants

As a result, the increased flow of remittances have led to overwhelming socio-economic benefits such as improved education and healthcare provision for expatriate family members, financially empowered women, entrepreneurship development especially in rural areas, expatriates‘ construction of buildings and ability to buy property and land has increased, increased propensity to save. Overall, remittances have strengthened the current account balance and lowered the unemployment level and alleviating poverty. According to the 2019 World Bank Migration and Development Brief, Bangladesh stood at 9th position among the world‘s top ten remittance earner countries and 3rd in South Asian region in 2018.

Bangladesh National Report, 2019

2.8 GOOD GOVERNANCE AT ALL LEVELS

Strengthening Good Governance, the Rule of Law and Human Rights

The IPoA states that good governance and the rule of law at the local, national and international levels are essential for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. Progress has been made by many LDCs in good governance, the rule of law, the protection and promotion of human rights and democratic participation. According to the world governance indicators of the World Bank, voice and accountability improved, on average, in the LDCs from a score 1 of -0.96 in 2011 to -0.61 in 2018. That improvement was driven in large part by Asia-Pacific LDCs, which recorded an average score of -0.28 in 2018, with several Pacific LDCs displaying scores above 0.5 (UNOHRLLS, 2019b; UNOHRLLS,2020).

The Ugandan Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was established under Article 51 of the Constitution to handle human rights related cases as part of the measures of good governance. Since its inception in 2010/11 the UHRC has successfully created awareness on human rights. UHRC investigated 530 cases in 2010/11, 817 in 2015/16 and 287 in 2017/18. In 2015/16, a significant 3289 complaints were registered. Between FY2010/11 and FY2017/18, the number of registered complaints reduced by 30% from 797 to 556 respectively. Uganda is a signatory to most core international and regional human rights treaties. In 2017 and 2018, Uganda ratified a total of 9 treaties. In 2012, Uganda passed the law on the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture criminalizing torture and giving effect to the obligation of Uganda as a state party to the UN CAT (Uganda National Report, 2019).

The efforts of the Government of Burkina Faso in promoting good governance and the rule of law have resulted in the adoption and implementation of several initiatives including: 1) National Justice Policy (2010-2019); 2) National Human Rights and Civic Promotion Policy (2013-2022); 3) Political “Justice and Human Rights” (2018-2027). Since 2011, initiatives for the introduction of human rights education in educational and public vocational schools have been implemented. As a result, 119 human rights promotion clubs have been set up in 11 regions (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019).

The Government of Zambia also made efforts to ensure the inclusion of human rights into school curriculums from primary to secondary levels of education as well as Defence and Security divisions of Government. Zambia has created an enabling environment for other stakeholders such as civil society organisations to undertake human rights education and awareness activities countrywide (Zambia National Report, 2019).

To fully protect and promote the rights of women and children, and of vulnerable groups, the Royal Government of Bhutan approved the National Policy for Persons with Disability. A study on Violence against Children was conducted in 2016. It shed light on the situation of children and their vulnerability to violence, exploitation, and abuse, particularly children with disabilities, children from broken homes or living with extended families, and children from low economic backgrounds. The study encouraged the establishment of Law clubs in schools and promotion of legal knowledge under the “Know the Law- to protect your rights” series which has increased awareness on legal rights of children. The Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) has established three Women and Child Protection Units (WCPU) in the country since the study (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

E-Governance: Integrating ICT into Governance to Improve Public Service Delivery

According to UN DESA (2018), e-government has been growing rapidly over the past 17 years globally. The average of the e-government development index, which is developed by DESA, for the delivery of public services has increased from 0.242 in 2012 to 0.296 in 2018 in LDCs. Nonetheless, LDCs are lacking behind many countries and the world average which is almost twice as high with 0.549 (UNOHRLLS, 2020).

Since 2014, all 193 UN member states have been delivering some form of online presence. Although there have been global gains and major investments, digital divides persist especially in the LDCs. Online use offers an opportunity for e-inclusion but also a risks a new digital divide, owing to insufficient access in low income countries, either because of a lack of devices, or of bandwith and speed. While these online services support governments to build resilient societies, the 2018 EGDI survey by DESA notes a negative correlation between digital use and social exclusion. The 14 countries in the low EGDI group are African and are LDCs.

The majority of the world's population remains offline, which increases the risk that vulnerable groups without internet access will fall further behind in the rapidly progressing digital society. There are many opportunities to enhance social and digital inclusion through e-government and that emerging technologies and innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships can help to expand e-government access for all and provide dedicated services to address traditional problems related to poverty and social exclusion.

Broadband has the potential to make Government operations more transparent and efficient,by increasing public engagement and saving citizens and businesses time and money through online service delivery. As a result, several LDCs embraced E-Governance (Broadband Commission and UN-OHRLLS, 2018). In Ethiopia, 20% of public services in government institutions are now delivered by electronic means (Ethiopia National Report, 2019).

In Bangladesh, all interactions between the government, citizens and service providers have been digitalized under the auspices of "Digital Bangladesh". Such services include e-tax, e-transportation and e-health. The provision of e-governance has made public administration fast and effective, provided better services and response to the demands for transparency and accountability. E-governance has also enhanced economic growth and promoted social inclusion of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in society. As a result, Bangladesh's E-Government Readiness Index (EGDI) score improved to 0.2757 positioning the country from 150th to 148th among 193 countries in the 2012 survey (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).

Bhutan has made mentionable progress in E-Governance moving from 152nd to 143rd position in the EGDI. To enhance access to services, the government implemented the Government-Citizen Project, which resulted in 155 services available online and 19 mobile ready applications. The digitalization of public services has improved access and strengthened collaborative efforts among public entities (Bhutan National Report, 2019).

Benin has recently modernised and digitalised its legal system, with digital salaries and online meeting information for ministers. These policies have led to improved security and safety, which increased the coordination between the police and fire department with government ministries (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

In 2013/14, the Government of Lesotho initiated the "Lesotho E-Government Infrastructure Project", with the aim to enhance good governance by the deployment of a modern and secure E-Governance broadband infrastructure. The project has enhanced coordination across ministries, key agencies and local governments and it has also strengthened government data centres and portals. As a result, provision of e-services such as automated administrative services including e-payroll, civil registration, e-health, e-procurement, e-customs and revenue management have improved (Lesotho National Report, 2019).

With assistance from USAID, the Government of Liberia connected 41 ministries and agencies to the E-Governance platform to improve productivity and service delivery and boost government capacity to increase domestic revenue generation capacity. The ICT sector in Liberia is still challenged however, with weak policy and regulatory framework, inadequately trained personnel, limited ICT infrastructure and unstable and inadequate supply of electricity to enhance productivity in the sector (Liberia National Report, 2019).

In 2017, the Government of Vanuatu launched an online portal for scholarship applications available through the Ministry of Education and Training's scholarship website. The bilingual website and online application process is a milestone development to help ensure that the Vanuatu Government Scholarships are transparent, accountable and responsive. This system will assist the TSCU and National Scholarships and Training Board to more effectively assess and select scholarship recipients in order to meet the national workforce priority needs of Vanuatu. To date there is only one example of an e-Government service in Vanuatu where the public can submit an online application (Broadband Commission & UNOHRLLS, 2018).

In 2013, the government of Rwanda entered into a 25 year PPP with Rwanda Online Platform Limited (ROPL) for managing the portal for the delivery of online government services. Although moving services online has reduced costs, user fees have remained the same in order for ROPL to earn income (Broadband Commission & UNOHRLLS, 2018).

Box 5: Whole of Government Approach: Launch of Smart Village Project in Niger

With the help of various stakeholders, including UN agencies such as ITU, the Nigerien National Agency for the Information Society – ANSI – is at the forefront of this ambitious project leading the national effort to connect rural villages in Niger, in a coordinated "whole-of-government" response. One of the ways that the 'smart' villages are achieved is through the deployment of innovative apps which have been mounted on tablets as 'plug-and-play solutions' which are handed out in rural communities to introduce and support digital education, digital health and digital agriculture. A local WiFi hotspot links to a micro-server with at least 500 GB of storage that is fed with locally appropriate Wikipedia information and regularly updated. This information can be accessed via the tablets. The new tablets will therefore open the door to distance education and more opportunities.

The apps also encourage the production of food with high nutritional values, such as fruit and vegetables. In addition to the app, and taking advantage of rising mobile-cellular subscriptions – today, half of Niger's population has a mobile phone – SMS alerts and voice messages are sent out to farmers

to inform them about agricultural best practices and advisories on weather and prevailing market prices. Medical field workers such as nurses, can use the tablets to provide guidance to local health workers using telemedicine and e-health services – a game changer in community welfare. These local health workers can then use the tablet as a reference while evaluating the condition of patients and, if needed, refer cases to doctors in Niamey, using apps like Skype to make a call.
Source: ITU (available at https://news.itu.int/niger-2-0-digital-gateway-to-sustainable-development/)

Eliminating Corrupt Practices Through Various Reforms, Practices and Participation

The number of LDCs that are States parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption increased from 33 in 2010 to 45 in 2019 (UNOHRLLS, 2020). 7 Asia-Pacific LDCs and 5 African LDCs have become new States parties in the last decade. Only two African LDCs – Eritrea and Somalia – have not joined the United Nations Convention against Corruption yet. Since Tuvalu became a State Party to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) on 4 September 2015, there have been ongoing efforts to implement the UNCAC at the national level (Tuvalu National Report, 2019). Tuvalu has completed its first review cycle on chapters I and V of the UNCAC and is now in the process of completing the second review cycles on chapters II and V of the UNCAC (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).

In Ethiopia, a series of training and awareness creation activities were undertaken to tackle issues of corruption and maladministration. In 2017/18, the Ethiopian Anti-Corruption Commission investigated 10,172 applications and prosecuted 9,086. As a result, a commendable 40 million Birr (approx. USD$ 1.235 million) was returned to the government treasury from the culprits (Ethiopia National Report, 2019).

Eritrea and Uganda have zero tolerance for corruption policy. In Eritrea, proper use of resources is stressed at all levels of the government structure and there is no impunity for any person that is involved in corruption (Eritrea National Report, 2016; Uganda National Report, 2019).

In 2018, the President of Uganda, H.E. Mr Yoweri Museveni launched a new Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) under the Office of the President that receives and acts on complaints related to corruption. By October 10th, the ACU had received 58,400 corruption complaints of which 8,022 have been concluded, 4,017 are still underway and another 35,280 cases have been referred to relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies for administrative management. As a result of these policies, Uganda's position under the macro Transparency International 2019 ranking improved from 151st to 149th out of 180 countries and territories. The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) developed and implemented an anti-corruption strategy to guide on efforts aimed at fighting corruption across all institutions. This has led to an increase in the disposal rate or corruption against those registered at the anti-corruption division (Uganda National Report, 2019).

To fight against corruption, money laundering and non-transparency, the Government of Senegal introduced performance-based budgeting and decentralized spending authorities to ministries in accordance with guidelines from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). At the institutional level, the National Financial Information Processing Unit (CENTIF), the Court of Suppression of Illicit Enrichment (CREI), the General State Inspectorate (IGE), and also the creation of the National Office to Fight against Fraud and Corruption (OFNAC), were established to reflect a significant change in the legal system dedicated to the fight against corruption. Between 2015 and 2018, the country ranked 10th out of 54 countries in the Mo Ibrahim African Governance Index. Unlike other countries in the region, cases of corruption in Senegal are decreasing. The Organic Law on Finance Laws (OLFL) was approved in July 2011 and a transparency code was adopted in 2013 to establish the key principles of budget management. Senegal's ranking in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index has improved significantly in recent years: from 143rd in 2011 to 124th in 2014 (out of 175), it rose to 61st in 2015 (out of 168). In the 2018 edition, Senegal ranked 66th out of 180 countries with a score of 45/100 against 43/100 in 2015 (Senegal National Report, 2019).

Madagascar has made notable efforts to eliminate corrupt practices, in 2016 the country adopted a new anti-corruption law which allows self-referral to the Independent Office Anti-corruption (BIANCO). In addition, the law on the jurisdiction in charge of cases of corruption "the anti-poles corruption (PAC)" was adopted in 2016, replacing the Anti-Corruption Criminal Chain. Finally, the creation of an asset recovery mechanism and the establishment of a traceability system for anti-corruption cases (from the complaint to the final decision) were also established in 2016. These actions have increased the sensitivity and perception of the public towards the fight against corruption, especially with the establishment of the PAC. The effective implementation of these mechanisms should also help improve accountability and transparency. The majority of the population is aware of challenges in the fight against corruption and are ready to commit to moving forward (Madagascar National Report, 2019).

3. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

To conclude, the overall progress of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the decade 2011 – 2020 has been mixed and uneven. Commendable efforts have been made by all LDCs over the last decade with significant progress made across the 8 priority areas. Since the establishment of the LDC category in 1971 by the United Nations, only 5 countries have graduated from the category, and currently 12 LDCs are in different stages of the graduation process. As a group, the LDCs recorded fluctuating economic growth rates over the IPoA decade. Collectively, the LDCs were unable to attain the IPoA target of 7 per cent. Although at one time (2014), 14 LDCs grew at 7 per cent or more during the decade, however this economic expansion, even in the fastest growing LDCs, was not able to translate into meaningful poverty reduction.

New themes of progress were highlighted in the second half of the decade such as the growing importance of the service industry for LDCs predominantly tourism, increasing access to mobile broadband and ICT, importance of building resilience against climate change and strengthening agricultural productivity through agribusiness and land reform.

Further development in recurring themes including efforts to develop hard infrastructure such as roads and railways continued in the LDCs during the IPoA period. LDCs with support from development partners forged ahead to diversify into modern, clean and renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. Overall, access to renewable electricity sources in the LDCs increased for both urban and rural populations. In urban areas the percentage of the population with access to electricity increased from 70 per cent in 2011 to 79 per cent in 2017 and in rural areas from 20 per cent in 2011 to 37.8 per cent in 2017.

Human and social indicators especially health and education improved. Average enrolment rates have been increasing in both primary and secondary education. Although substantial progress has been made since the beginning of the decade, universal primary education remains a challenge for many LDCs with persisting challenges such as high pupil-to-teacher ratios, poor infrastructure, inadequate training and deficiencies in equipment. Several LDCs have raised public expenditure on higher education to over 1 per cent of GDP during the IPoA implementation period.

Over the IPoA decade, expenditure on health increased in the LDCs from 4.189 per cent of GDP in 2011 to 4.253 per cent of GDP in 2017. 16 LDCs achieved the MDG 4 target of reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds or more. Overall, the LDCs reduced the prevalence rate of the undernourished population from 23.69 per cent in 2011 to 22.81 per cent in 2017.

Gender disparities however, remain across all priority areas. Mobilizing sufficient financing remains a major challenge in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite signs of progress, investments that are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remain underfunded in LDCs.

Over the decade, aggregate growth was collectively highest in Asian LDCs, followed by Africa and Haiti, but lowest in the island LDCs (United Nations, 2019; UNCTAD, 2019). With the exception of Ethiopia, the manufacturing sector in African LDCs was mainly stagnant throughout the period of IPoA implementation. The service sector grew from 47.05 percent to 49.07 in African LDCs, with exports from the countries in Africa accounting for more than half of the total commercial services exports for the LDCs, which were mainly in transport and tourismAsian and Pacific LDCs improved most in building productive capacity to achieve high and sustainable growth and structural transformation, with increasing contribution of manufacturing value added to GDP from 15.46 in 2011 to 17.12 in 2016. Efforts towards universal access to electricity improved in the Asian Pacific LDCs as urban access electricity rates reached above 50 per cent.

The Asian Pacific LDCs managed to increase agricultural yields while African LDCs maintained low productivity in this sector due to low capitalization of the sector. The value added share of agriculture as a percentage of GDP amongst the LDCs increased slightly from 26.41 per cent in 2011 to 26.61 per cent in 2015. African LDCs share increased from 27.65 per cent to 31.5 per cent in 2011 and 2015 respectively, while the Asian and Pacific LDCs share declined from 24.68 per cent in 2011 to 20.27 per cent in 2015. The average share of primary commodities exports across the LDCs increased significantly during the commodity boom, and have remained around 70 per cent in 2011, with a much higher share in African LDCs at 84 per cent compared to figures in Asia and the Pacific at 38 per cent. Aggregate FDI flows to African LDCs dropped by 31 per cent with major contractions in Angola and Mozambique. By contrast, FDI to the Asia-Pacific LDCs increased by 20 per cent.

However, with just 6 months left until the end of the decade, the prospects of the LDCs achieving all targets with their final efforts seems unlikely, especially with the newly emerged challenge of Covid-19 Coronavirus Disease that is affecting the entire global community. The effect of the pandemic on the LDCs will have major implications on the last efforts to achieve the IPoA goals and overall SDGs by 2030. The pandemic threatens to undo progress achieved towards sustainable development by the LDCs over recent decades. With weak health infrastructures, high poverty levels and poor housing and sanitation in many of the LDCs, any significant outbreak will prove challenging for the countries to address. At this point, LDCs need support to assess the potential economic impact of the pandemic, which will depend on the extent and duration of the shock. Domestic government revenues, exports, investment flows and remittances will likely be negatively affected. Strong support from the international community will be critical in helping LDCs address and minimize the impact of the shock of the pandemic.

Most of the LDC Governments are facing serious capacity and institutional constraints to domesticate and integrate the IPoA and other internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) into their national planning and budget system (Pradhan, 2017). Other gaps relate to limited investment, including foreign direct investment (FDI) and stagnant official development assistance (ODA) flows to LDCs that remain below targets. (Lebada, 2018). With LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa facing common challenges such as low electrification rates, rural electrification, electricity price, installed capacity and availability of finance. (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).

With common challenges such as persistently high logistics costs, weak institutional coordination, lack of quality infrastructure and limited market access, the LDC community must urgently move beyond the business as usual approach and international community especially development partners must genuinely step up efforts. For LDCs, structural transformation plays a crucial role as an enabler of sustainable development. Therefore LDCs and their development partners should sequence their policy and spending focus on the SDGs that are most relevant to structural transformation – goals 7, 8, 9, 12 and 17 should receive greater attention and resources as rapid progress in these goals will enable the realization of the other goals (UNTAD, 2019b).

As we prepare to enter a new decade the next LDC agenda (LDC V) should put special emphasis on industrialization and wealth creation as these will contribute to poverty alleviation, inclusive growth and sustainable development (UNOHRLLS, 2018b) and focus should be laid on how the multilateral system can assist LDCs to prosper and how the United Nations can better advocate for LDCs (UNOHRLLS, 2018b).

4.0 SUMMARY TABLE

Key Elements of Success	Action and Impact
Priority Area: Productive Capacity Promoting Tourism and Expanding Aviation Infrastructure to Increase Economic Growth	**Guinea:** With increased business opportunities in extractive industries, energy infrastructure, agribusiness and real estate, Guinea is fast becoming a hub for business tourism. Since 2013, Guinea has been boosting efforts to promote and attract business tourism by reviving old hotels and building new business hotels. In total several hundred millions of Euros have been invested into the capital's hotel industry, nearly 2500 rooms have been created along with several thousands of jobs (indirect and direct) over the last 5 years. Most hotels have business conference facilities and meeting rooms allowing Guinea to match its supply to the growing business client demand. In 2016, 33,012 tourists visited for business (from 15,561 in 2014), 15,123 for family reasons (from 6,858 in 2014) and 4,564 for pleasure (from 3,042 in 2014) (Investing Guinea, 2019). **Uganda:** The tourism sector has gained significant progress in Uganda. To boost gross domestic product (GDP), the Government has made conscious efforts to improve tourism infrastructure, security and political stability. Organised marketing has also become a strategy to attract visitors from key source countries. As a result, visitor arrivals have increased from 945,899 in 2010/11 to 1,505,669 in 2018, earning the country foreign exchange revenue of USD1.6 billion in 2018 from USD 662 million in 2010 and USD 1,085 million in FY2013/14. The contribution of the tourism sector to GDP grew from 7.6% in 2010/11 to 9.9% in FY2014/15 before declining to 7.3% in FY2017/18 (Uganda National Report 2019). **Gambia:** Air Transport plays a major role within the Gambia's Transport System in providing international gateways for the business community with the rest of the world and it is of critical importance for the Gambia Tourist Industry. Over the IPoA period, there has been significant growth in air traffic demand at Banjul International Airport. In 2018, In 2018, a total of 53,735 passengers were handled at the airport relative to 11,284 in 2012 (World Bank, World Bank Indicators). In the last quarter of 2018, Turkish Airlines started operating 3 weekly flights to Istanbul (Gambia National Report, 2019). **Cambodia:** Cambodia had 48 airlines operating (including 9 domestic and 39 international airlines), 99,197 flights, 10, 013,118 air passengers and 73,592 cargo tonnes transported through Cambodia. This is a significant increase compared to 2014 figures of 27 airlines, 60, 935 flights, 5, 467,591 air passengers and 32,849 cargo tonnes (Cambodia National Report, 2019).

	Tuvalu: During the IPoA implementation period, Tuvalu accelerated its efforts to improve aviation infrastructure with support from development partners. Considerable progress was achieved with the completion of the airport terminal and control tower, rehabilitation of the runway, and provision of air traffic control equipment and satellite communications network. As a result, in 2018 Air Kiribati commenced weekly flights between Tarawa and Funafuti (Tuvalu National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Productive Capacity Connecting main corridors via road, rail and sea to improve access to markets	**Djibouti:** Transport and related logistical services remain the backbone of the economy in Djibouti. The Government launched a programme to increase port activity in 2012 by building two ports as well as road corridors. Much of this is intended to meet the needs of the growing Ethiopian economy. Landlocked Ethiopia, which has a population approaching 100 million, is the primary user of Djibouti's port, and currently generates 85 per cent of the trade that moves through Djibouti's container terminal. The recent high growth experienced in Ethiopia has helped transform Djibouti's economy, and integrated the two economies even further (IRENA, 2015). **Togo & Burkina Faso:** The 120-metre Alemondji bridge was built as part of the renovation of the roads on the CU9 corridor linking Togo (Lomé & Cinkansé) to Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou). The $325 million-project was 70% financed by the African Development Fund, the concessional funding arm of the African Development Bank, and by the Fragile States Facility. Work was carried out on 150 km of road in Togo and a further 153 km in Burkina Faso. On the Togolese side, the Atakpamé-Blitta (102 km) and Blitta-Aouda (48 km) sections were renovated, 55 km of rural feeder roads were improved, and the Alemondji bridge was rebuilt. Since the road rehabilitation there has been an increase in traffic to and from Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali transporting 2 million tonnes of goods per year since 2016. Travel times between the Burkinabe capital of Ouagadougou and the port of Lomé halved from six to three days between 2011 and 2016. Improved access to other important facilities including the Lawagnon Adult Training Institute for the Development of Fish Farming and the Order of Malta General Hospital are all now reachable across the bridge. This infrastructure ensures a flow of agricultural production and improved access to markets for inputs and products. Additionally, it stimulates the economy and facilitates the region's integration into the national and international economies. The road project has put an end to the isolation of the agricultural communities of Gbécon and Morétan and it has improved the supply

	of drinking water for 15 neighbouring villages. The project also renovated and extended the international market at Anié and the weekly market at Doufio in northern Togo improving women's incomes (AfDB).
Priority Area: Productive Capacity Diversifying energy sources to promote renewable energy generation	**Bhutan:** Bhutan's commendable achievement in attaining universal access was obtained through its abundant resource of hydro-electric power. Hydropower is Bhutan's comparative advantage and its sustainable exploitation has had significant impact in boosting the country's economy. It constitutes 16 per cent of GDP and 30 per cent of revenue. As of 2017, the installed generation capacity was approximately 1,488 MW. In Bhutan, as electricity production comes overwhelmingly from hydropower, there is a need for greater diversification. To diversify sources of energy, the Royal Government adopted the Alternative Renewable Energy (ARE) Policy, which targets to generate 20 MW from various technologies by 2025. Initiatives have already commenced with the installation of a 600 kW wind power plant on a pilot basis that electrifies 300 households (Bhutan National Report, 2019). **Ethiopia:** With a massive potential in renewable energy, the Government of Ethiopia has been investing greatly to develop its power sector and make the country a power hub in the region. As a result, the national electric power generation capacity increased from 2049 MW in 2010/11 to 4269.5 MW in 2017/18. The length of electric power transmission lines also increased to 19,664 km in the same period. As a result, the number of cities which have access to electricity rose to 7,068 in 2017/18 while coverage of electric services grew from 45 per cent in 2010/11 to 58.6 per cent in 2017/18 (Ethiopia IPoA National Report, 2019). **Solomon Islands:** In 2015, just 0.08 per cent of energy produced by the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) was from renewable sources. Therefore, to increase renewable energy generation, Solomon Islands opened the market to independent Power Providers (IPP) to ensure sound technical and managerial expertise to deliver projects effectively. Financing of $30 million ($18 million loan and $12 million grant) for the Tina River Hydropower Project was requested by the Government in 2016, with the Board approval expected in the first quarter 2019. As of 2012-13, The Solar Power Development Project which cost $8.44 million, provided 44 per cent of rural households with access to lighting through Solar PV (Solomon Islands National Report, 2019). **Bangladesh:** The Solar Home System (SHS) is a signature project of the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority

	under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources in Bangladesh. Under this programme off grid rural homes and communities were provided with solar renewable energy as their primary fuel, replacing environmentally hazardous kerosene and diesel. Access to solar power has improved rural livelihoods. Currently, there are 13 million users from 4.5 million household systems with an installation capacity of approximately 3MW. Additional benefits of the SHS is the solar pump that provides irrigation capacity and a solar stove and the improved public health. The SHS has successfully given off grid rural communities access to power to charge mobile phone and power services, thus contributing to sustainable development goals on energy, environment and health (Bangladesh National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Productive Capacity Providing Universal Access to Mobile Broadband and Telecommunication Services	**Sudan:** According to the National Report, Sudan made impressive strides in liberalizing its ICT markets to become one of the most liberalized markets in Africa during the IPoA period. The number of Internet users reached 10.2 million in 2016, with 31 per cent of the population as internet users putting Sudan at a much higher rate compared to all its neighbours (except Egypt). The number of mobile phone subscribers increased from 18.3 million in 2010 to 28.7 million in 2017 and mobile phone coverage reached between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the country. Sudan is slightly higher in terms of mobile subscription per 100 person compared to other LDCs (Sudan National Report, 2019). **Sao Tome and Principe:** Sao Tome and Principe is estimated to have the highest level of Internet use among African LDCs. The country started installing infrastructure and 3G mobile broadband in 2012 and now covers over 90 per cent of the population. The transformational event was the connection in 2012 to the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) undersea fibre-optic cable. Since then, the use of international Internet bandwidth has increased over 15-fold and Internet use has grown by 67 per cent. Another significant event was the launch of competition in 2015, which had a significant impact on prices. The price of a monthly 500 MB prepaid mobile broadband basket in 2015 was 3.3 per cent of average per capita income. The launch of the competitor provider had positive impacts on young people and secondary school enrolment. In 2014, internet became popular with young people aged 15 – 24 years, with usage of 38 per cent. It has promoted a high level of internet connectivity in schools and some of the funds received from the second operator’s licence are being used to provide tablets for secondary students. There is however still the challenge of the gender gap that must be addressed. In 2014, 32 per cent of young women aged 15-24 were online, compared to 43 per cent of young men in that age group (UNOHRLLS and ITU, 2018).

Priority Area: Productive Capacity Implementing Various Reforms to improve the business environment and Encourage Private Sector Investment	**Zambia:** Promoting Industrialisation - In line with its industrial policy, Zambia has been promoting local and foreign direct investment with a view of stimulating industrialisation in the country. Establishment of Multi-Facility Economic Zones (MFEZs) - MFEZs are special industrial zones for both export-oriented and domestic-oriented industries. The zones aim to have the requisite infrastructure and other incentives in place in order to attract and facilitate establishment of world-class enterprises. Presently, three MFEZs are operational with investment worth more than US$2.5 billion by more than fifty enterprises involved in manufacturing of food and beverages, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and value addition to copper, among others. **Guinea:** The Government has worked hard to improve the business climate and key economic governance indicators. The process to incorporate a business has been simplified, it now takes just 72 hours to set up a company and 29 days to grant building permits. Taxes on property transfers and notary fees have also been reduced. The Private Investment Promotion Agency (APIP) was restructured to house a Single Window for investors providing a one stop shop, with the mining sector having its own Single Window. To improve governance, the IMF provide authorities with technical assistance to modernize the tax system, strengthen national statistical capacities and reform the foreign exchange market, central bank liquidity management and access to credit for the private sector (Investing Guinea, 2019). **Nepal:** During the IPoA period, quantitative indicators showed that Nepal had been lagging behind in terms of private sector development. The low level of private sector development has been considered as both a cause and an outcome of the country's low level of economic development. To improve the country’s status the Government of Nepal enacted a new Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA) and amended the Special Economic Zone Act (SEZA) with aim of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the growth drivers and export potential sectors. In addition Policy and administrative reforms on entry, registration and operation of businesses, specifically improving the process to obtain construction permits, credit, and contracts and trade across border improved the ease of doing business in Nepal (Nepal National Report, 2019)
Priority Area: Agriculture, food security and rural development	**Mozambique:** In 2000, Mozambique suffered its worst flooding in 150 years, causing the deaths of nearly 800 people, the displacement of 540,000 people and the loss of 20 per cent of GDP. One particularly urgent issue for Mozambique is that it is the only

Adopting Climate Smart Agricultural Initiatives to Build Resilience and Safeguard Livelihoods	country in Africa at high risk of every one of the principal negative impacts of global warming: drought, flooding and coastal cyclones. These hazards have cost the country an average of 1.1 per cent of GDP and have produced devastating repercussions for farmers – with 3 out of 4 Mozambican farmers losing harvests or livestocks every year from 2000 to 2013. Providing climate resilient infrastructure is a necessity in Mozambique. To address the challenges, in 2013, the Government launched the Baixo Limpopo Climate Resilience Pilot Project (BLCRPP). The project sought to improve the productivity of the country's farmers by providing access to water year-round, while also helping them to mitigate and adapt to adverse climate change impacts. Since implementation, the BLCRPP has been training farmers directly in climate-smart agricultural practices, how to maintain optimal water levels for crops year-round, and the effective use of fertilisers – as well as post-harvest practices – including cleaning, sorting and drying of produce and the construction of a cold-storage and agro-processing facility. In Gaza province, around 8,000 farmers gained access to irrigation and improved drainage through the project. Just over 1,000 ha of land in the Magula East region of Gaza province has been equipped with irrigation pipelines. As a result, farmers in the area have seen production levels increase by up to 75 per cent. The upgraded road surface gives farmers better access to larger urban markets, while also improving accessibility in the event of floods or other emergencies. Better drainage along the roads, has helped to reduce soil erosion previously caused by surface runoff. 5,000 local farmers also received training in the maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure. By 2016, 3 years into the project's implementation, Mozambique produced around 800,000 tonnes of vegetables, increased from 550,000 tonnes in 2012. The African Development Bank's climate-smart resilience financing is helping to lift Mozambicans out of poverty, and dramatically improve livelihoods (AfDB, 2018c).
Priority Area: Agriculture, food security and rural development Promoting Agribusiness Amongst the Youth and Women to Empower and Encourage Income Generation Opportunities	**Malawi:** To ensure an increased number of youth and women engaged in farming and agribusiness, a collaborative project Promoting Decent Rural Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Agribusiness was implemented in Malawi. Through the project 103 rural youths were trained on agribusiness. The youths were also involved in the implementation of agricultural clusters, farmer field schools, farmer business schools' approaches and integrated homestead farming. The Government also initiated the Agricultural Infrastructure and Youth in Agribusiness Project (AIYAP) with the aim of building the capacity of the youths in value addition and entrepreneurship skills. A total of 148 youth "agripreneurs" were trained in horticulture, livestock farming, green house farming, gender based industry and marketing skills.

	The project has a target of reaching to 5,000 youth in farming and agribusiness with at least 50% being female by 2022 (Malawi National Report, 2019). **Togo:** The Support Project for Youth Employability and Integration in Growth Sectors (PAEIJ-SP) was initiated by the Togolese Ministry of Development at the Base, Handicrafts, Youth and Youth Employment (MDBAJEJ) with the assistance of the Africa Development Bank. It responded to the concern of youth employment in Togo and promoted entrepreneurship in growth sectors, particularly the agricultural sector. The objective of this project is to create the conditions for more inclusive economic growth by improving youth employability and promoting entrepreneurship in growth sectors. It aimed to create 19,600 jobs by 2020 targeting the maize, cassava, soybean, small ruminant and poultry sectors. The specific objectives are: (i) support to Producer Services Companies and Organizations (ESOPs) that have the required profiles, (ii) support to first-time entrepreneurs and producers along the identified agricultural value chains (AVCs), (iii) support for young graduates in business management to train them in entrepreneurship support (AfDB, 2020). The project was a great success, assisting almost double the initial target of youth. Overall, 35,000 jobs were (14,290 direct and 20,940 temporary) in agricultural SMEs (AfDB 2020).
Priority Area: Agriculture, food security and rural development Provision of Input Subsidies and Irrigation to Improve Food Security	**Madagascar:** In Madagascar, the Government has been supplying critical inputs such as seeds and fertilisers under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. According to the Madagascar National Report (2019), in 2018, 132,766 farmers benefited from the distribution of agricultural input subsidies. These programs under the Ministry of Agriculture had a positive impact on the productivity of farmers, increasing rice production from 3,650,00 tonnes in 2016 to 4,030,000 tonnes in 2018 and thereby increasing food availability in the country (Madagascar National Report, 2019). In 2013, the African Development Bank also funded and launched a program intended to improve local agricultural infrastructure through the refurbishment of irrigation channels in order to mitigate the impacts of the regions extreme vulnerability to climate change. By the end of December 2018, the district of Toliara had 74 km of canals and 40 km of protective dykes covering 5,800 hectares of irrigated land, as well as three warehouses for food storage (AfDB, 2018). **Zambia:** Through the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) E-Voucher, the Government of Zambia provided subsidised inputs to farmers using electronic vouchers. The programme started with 13 pilot districts in 2015/16 and scaled up to 39 districts and

	countrywide in the 2016/17 and 2018/19 agricultural seasons. In the initial 13 E-Voucher pilot districts, 85 per cent of the households redeemed fertilizer and maize seed. Of the remaining 15 per cent, the highest share of households redeemed livestock inputs such as veterinary drugs. By the end of 2018, there were over 850,000 beneficiaries. The programme had a few challenges including late payments to suppliers and agro dealers, selective activation of cards and attempted sabotage. The e- voucher programme was successful in creating jobs and improving overall income of farmers. It also identified the great potential for crop diversification, (Zambia National Report, 2019; ELDIS, 2016; PMRC, 2019).
Priority Area: Agriculture, food security and rural development Land Reform and Rehabilitation to Alleviate Poverty and Food Insecurity	**Bhutan:** The National Rehabilitation Programme (NRP) to benefit rural farmers was initiated by the National Land Commission Secretariat (NLCS) of Bhutan. The aim of the programme was to alleviate poverty and food insecurity by allocating economically viable farming land on a freehold basis. The Program was a success story with more than 6,536 landless households allotted with 23,800 acres (3.6 percent of total arable land) of farming land with an inclusive resettlement package. The Land Use Right System (URS) was also introduced to enhance economic livelihood opportunities. The URS allows beneficiaries to use state land as long as the land is being used productively for the purpose for which the land is allotted through payment of taxes at par with existing land tax Bhutan National Report, 2019). **Eritrea:** In Eritrea, the UNDP supported a pilot land tenure policy (replacing the customary system). The new land tenure system secures women's land rights, which were not provided for previously. In 2015, 23 villages, with 5,500 households (37 per cent female headed), benefited from secured land tenure. As a result, local communities increased investment in their land by doing extensive farmland terracing and engaging in soil and water conservation activities. Farmers planted 125,000 tree seedlings for fuelwood, construction material and income from the sale of timber. Give the huge success of the project, communities from other areas are demanding replication of these practices and the Government is considering scaling up the project. UNDP noted that it would support the efforts of the scale up by encouraging community engagement in local decision-making processes, among other activities (United Nations, 2016). **Cambodia:** In June 2018, Cambodia's Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction officially announced the introduction of the new land title with a Quick Response (QR) code registration system. This upgrade was created to help ease the management of databases of the General

	Department of Topography and Geography, give fast access to the information and effectively put to an end of fake land titles. The printed QR code allows verification of the data on the title by the title-holder using the QR code reader app downloadable on a smart phone (Construction-property, 2018). Since it was put into effect in 2018, land registration has increased from 28 per cent in 2011 to 73.25% in 2018. the technology has assisted in settling 8353 complaints of land disputes. Since its implementation land have been provided to a total of 78,545 families (equivalent to 140, 765.47 ha) (Cambodia National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Trade Improving Trade Facilitation: Enhancing Coordination and Cooperation of National Agencies Responsible for Border and Customs Controls	**Lao PDR:** The Lao Trade Portal was established in 2012 as a follow-up action from the approval of the Trade Facilitation Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015. The trade portal committee has been putting great efforts to improve the functionality of the portal by ensuring the availability of legal documents, tariff rates, forms and import-export procedures. This helps both local and foreign businesses to register in Lao PDR. The country has made tremendous progress in developing its transport infrastructure to support and facilitate the flow of trade. Around 85 per cent of the rural population now live in villages with all-weather road access. In 2009, the One District, One Product Strategy was inaugurated as a government strategy to reduce poverty, create jobs, and equip people with relevant skills, whilst bringing Lao products to the regional and international market. In May 2017, under the One District, One Product Strategy the Trade Department under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce recorded more than 484 products from 17 provinces and Vientiane Capital, and awarded more than 130 businesses with the One District, One Product trademark. On 26th July 2018, a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) was set up in accordance with Decision No. 48/PM. (Lao PDR National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Commodities Investing in Value Addition and Diversifying Commodities to Strengthen the Resilience of the National Economy from Shocks	**Afghanistan:** To reduce the reliance on poppy cultivation and improve local and household economies, the Government of Afghanistan initiated the Community Based Agriculture And Rural Development Program. Through this program 163 communities across three provinces were supported with the production and marketing of high-value crops. To support the communities production of the new crops, 624 vegetable processing kits, 180 honeybee production kits and 624 packaging equipment were distributed. Additionally, 109 commercial greenhouses for aloe vera and 39 raisin houses were constructed (Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, 2019). **Benin:** The success recorded in the context of cotton production, which positions Benin at the top of the list of producers, is the result of a long process of reforms and work. Just a few weeks after

	coming to power, the Government of President Patrice Talon handed over management of the cotton sector to the Inter-professional Cotton Association, restoring the framework agreement between the Association and the Government. The Government set a number of objectives for the Association to achieve including, to attract farmers and producers to grow cotton; to review the technical routes for greater productivity of cotton and crops per hectare; to reassure producers of immediate payments once their products are sold; to deploy agricultural and food inputs on time; and to pay arrears owed to producers. As a result, between 2011 and 2015, production almost doubled. In 2018, 678,000 tonnes of seed cotton were harvested, approximately five times the production of 2010 and approximately twice that of 2015. The increase in production has made Benin the leading producer of cotton in West Africa, ahead of Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal and even Togo, whose production figures remain below performance (Benin National Report, 2019). **Mali:** To promote crop diversification, the Government of Mali implemented a number of key programmes including, The Cashew Infrastructure Development Programme (CIDP) which targets to plant 60,000 hectares of cashew trees, benefiting 60,000 households in Western Province; The Rice Dissemination Project which is promoting the production of rice as well as research and development; The Smallholder Productivity Promotion Project (S3P) that promotes good agricultural practices in Luapula, Northern and Muchinga Provinces and has reached over 30,000 farmers. Over 90,000 beneficiaries have been positively affected through these programmes and now fruits, vegetables, harvested products and even oilseeds find their place among Mali's agricultural exports (Mali National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Human and Social Development **Preparing the Youth for Work Through Skills Development, Youth Entrepreneurship and Vocational Training**	**Solomon Islands:** The Youth@Work programme was initiated to provide pathways to employment and self-employment for thousands of unemployed and poorly educated youth in the Solomon Islands. In 7 years of the programme being implemented, over 10,000 youths have found employment or started their own businesses in urban and rural areas directly impacting the economy and reducing the rate on unemployment in the country (Solomon Islands National Report, 2019). **Burkina Faso & Senegal:** Burkina Faso and Senegal successfully implemented several nationally funded programs including: Informal Sector Support Fund (FASI), the Promotion Support Fund for Employees (FAPE) and the Support Fund for Youth Initiatives (FAIJ). The implementation of these projects and programs achieved the following significant results: (i) Creation of 67,366

	jobs; (ii) 7,000 young people and women received increased income and were promoted into decent employment between 2012 and 2017 (iii) Recruitment of 10,950 young people for High labour intensive works through the Socio-professional integration program for young people; (iv) Training of 110 out-of-school and out-of-school youth in driving machinery intended for mining and public works; (v) Funding of 18,448 projects and the consolidation of 50,556 jobs by the Youth Economic Empowerment Program and women (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019). Between 2014 and 2018, the Senegalese Youth Entrepreneurship Program (PSE-J) and the Sector Professionalization Programme enabled the training of 2,453 students in six priority sectors with the support of 298 companies (Senegal National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Human and Social Development Universal Access to Safe Drinking Water and Improved Sanitation	**Malawi:** To improve availability of water resources and efficient utilization, the following strategies were implemented by the Government of Malawi: (I) Improved utilization of groundwater resources; (ii) Enhanced development of multi-purpose dams; (iii) Improved water resources monitoring and managing information systems; and (iv) Promoted integrated planning in the water resources development and management activities. To ensure that rural areas were not left behind in terms of development, the Government implemented the Sustainable Rural Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Project. Through this project 266 sanitation facilities were constructed and 450 boreholes drilled across the country. This increased the number of people clean accessing water. The project also rehabilitated and extended 12 gravity fed schemes and constructed 2925 community water points to benefit 516,000 people in the targeted districts of Rumphi, Nkhotakota, Phalombe, Mangochi and Ntcheu. As a result, 87 per cent of the population in Malawi has access to safe water supply (IHS IV, 2017). Since 2011, nationally the percentage of people accessing clean water has steadily increased from 83 per cent in 2011 to 87 per cent in 2019. The percentage of people with access to clean water in rural areas increased from 80 per cent in 2011, to 84 per cent in 2015 and 86 per cent in 2019. (Malawi National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Human and Social Development Increasing representation of women in politics	**Ethiopia:** Women’s political participation in Ethiopia has been increasing over the IPoA decade. Since the new political reform, 50 per cent of the cabinet was female including the current President of Ethiopia Her Excellency Sahle-work Zewde. Approximately, 38.7 per cent of members of the House of People’s Representatives (HPR) are women. In the regional state’s HPRs, women’s participation reached 48 per cent (Ethiopia National Report, 2019). **Comoros:** Traditionally, Comoran woman are excluded from the public decision-making circle. However, with the mobilization of civil

	society organizations the situation changed, sparking increased female candidates in legislative elections, and as island and presidential governors. The first woman in the history of Independent Comoros was elected as the Governor of Grand Comore during the IPoA period. At the community level, the situation is evolving positively, towards more visibility and responsibility of women in the management of community life. In town halls, the proportion of women approached 30 per cent due to the law on decentralization and organization of municipal elections which require fair registration of both sexes in the lists of candidates. The proportion of women occupying senior positions in institutions also increased from 7.4 per cent to 21.2 per cent between 2000 and 2012. At the level of Governorates, there were a total of 4 women Commissioners between 2011 and 2017 (Comoros National Report, 2019) **Tuvalu:** In Tuvalu, while women are elected into the Kaupule[38], traditional gendered roles make it difficult for them to actively engage in decision-making. Women representation in the Kaupule has improved from 1 out of 48 women members in 2015 to 5 out of 48 in 2016. In 2017 Tuvalu appointed its first female Ambassador (Tuvalu National Report, 2019). **Mauritania:** The Government of Mauritania implemented a national program to promote and support the political participation of women, through several awareness-raising and training campaigns for elected women. As a result, the presence of women in decision-making spheres has considerably improved, with 35 per cent of women in regional councils, 19.6 per cent in the National Assembly, and 31 per cent in municipal councils. The female presence in the Council of Ministers reached, at times, almost a third of the Government (Mauritania National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Human and Social Development Increasing Enrolment in Educational Institutions through Incentives and Provision of Alternative Education Programs	**Guinea & Nepal:** Plan 2 is a training methodology that facilitates disability inclusion and improved education though inclusive sport and play. The project has directly helped 1,020 children with disabilities, and indirectly impacted 3,000 boys and girls. The Plan2Inclusivize Project was successfully implemented in Guinea and Nepal. In 2017, it was successfully piloted in Guinea and mainstreamed into an existing education programme from 2018 to increase the enrolment of children with disabilities in school. Plan International was also involved in the development of the Guinean Inclusive Education Strategy introduced in 2019 (UN DESA, 2019).

[38] Island Council

	Tanzania: Tanzania's Alternative Learning and Skills Development Centres were constructed with the African Development Fund (ADF) loan and grant totalling US$32.7 million. The Centres were designed to fill the gaps in non-formal education in Zanzibar, specifically on the islands of Unguja and Pemba. The project financed equipment purchase and development of teachers' manuals. The facilities supported a program of micro-loans to graduates of the centres for their business start-ups, under the Small Entrepreneurs Loan Facility (SELF) scheme. Over 1,000 community members (51 percent of them are women) received training in computer literacy, law and adult literacy in the Alternative Learning Centres. Graduates of the Skills Development Centres, 19 micro finance institutions and Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOS) in Zanzibar benefited from the project's Small Entrepreneurs Loan Facility (SELF). Under the SELF scheme 6,333 loans were disbursed with 70 per cent of recipients as female entrepreneurs (AfDB, 2018d). **Djibouti & Burundi:** School meals in targeted rural pre, primary and middle schools combine WFP internationally-purchased commodities and fresh food purchased locally with complementary funds allocated by the Government of Djibouti. Currently, 17,000 children receive a morning snack and a hot lunch. A take-home ration of oil is provided to families of school girls as an incentive to keep them in school through the 9th grade. The WFP is supporting the capacity of the Government towards the establishment of a sustainable national school feeding programme. Over 464,000 children in 691 schools throughout Burundi are fed at school through the home-grown school meals programme. Fresh vegetables, fortified flour and enriched vegetable oil help overcome major deficiencies in primary school children, including vitamin A and iron deficiencies, which both affect learning abilities. WFP aims to procure up to half of its food from local farmers by supporting the establishment of local farmer cooperatives. Last year WFP purchased 3,500 metric tons of local commodities — 31 percent of all food bought for school meals — injecting US$3 million into the local economy. In 2017, a WFP pilot included using local UHT milk in school meals for 40,000 children. Due to the success of the school feeding programme in Burundi, dropout rates have decreased from 15 percent (2014) to 5 percent (2017). The Government of Burundi has recognized the programme as one of the key interventions to enrol and keep children from food-insecure provinces at school, especially girls.
Priority Area: Human and Social Development	**Senegal:** In Senegal there have been comparable improvements in health, in particular in women's health and nutrition. Cash transfers for families in need, health coverage for every household

Initiatives to Promote Health and Health Equity	and improved coverage for people with disabilities have improved overall health of the population. However, more work needs to be done to achieve universal health coverage (UNOHRLLS, 2019b). The proportion of births attended by a skilled health provider increased from 51 per cent in 2012 to 74 per cent in 2018, with more than 80 per cent of deliveries taking place in a health facility. The maternal mortality rate experienced a significant drop between 2010-11 and 2017, from 392 deaths per 100,000 live births to 315 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2015 and 236 deaths in 2017. The revival of Family Planning (FP) ensured training activities, supervision, and securing / availability of contraceptive products, strengthening of staff by itinerant midwives, the strengthening of providers' capacities, the allocation of structures sanitary materials for strengthening the health of mothers and children as well as the role played by the "Badiènu Gox" who are women volunteers who support the monitoring of maternal health in the community in the promotion of assisted delivery. Contraceptive prevalence improved from 12 per cent in 2011 to 25.4 per cent in 2018. The efforts made to reduce malaria rates such as the distribution of long-lasting mosquito nets (LLINs) have resulted in a spectacular drop in the prevalence of malaria in Senegal from 2.8 per cent in 2013 to 0.4 per cent in 2017. The percentage of households with at least one treated mosquito net increased between 2012 and 2017, from 73 per cent to 84 per cent. However, there was a decrease in 2018 with a percentage of 77 per cent. The average number of nets per household, increased from 2.8 in 2012 to 3.2 in 2018 (Senegal National Report, 2019). **Sierra Leone:** Sierra Leone improved health outcomes through: (i) free treatment for pregnant and lactating mothers and under-fives; (ii) free family planning products; (iii) the introduction of family life education in schools; (iv) the integration of family planning into the National Development Plan; (v) the provision of antiretroviral drugs; (vi) the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission project; (vii) education on stigma and discrimination; (viii) training for healthcare workers; (ix) the distribution of bed nets; (x) free malaria curative and preventive drugs (UNOHRLLS, 2019b).
Priority Area: Human and Social Development Implementing Social Safety Nets such as Cash Transfers to Ensure Dignity and Income for Vulnerable Populations	**Senegal:** Senegal’s Equal Opportunity Card Program allows people living with a disability to benefit from seven benefits relating to health, rehabilitation, education, training, transport, employment and project funding. Over the 2014-2018 period, almost 50,006 people living with disabilities in 2017 compared to 2,679 in 2014 obtained the card. In 2018, the Program made it possible to enrol 25,507 holders into the family security scholarships; 19,230 holders were registered in mutual health insurance; 633 holders had free access to the transport network. This Program has been successful

	in making efforts to provide equal opportunities to all and leaving no one behind (Senegal National Report, 2019). **Malawi:** The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), public works programmes (PWPs) and the National School Meals Programme (SMP) provides direct consumption support to Malawian citizens. In 2019, the Government increased the SCTP coverage from 176,000 households to 280,000 households thereby covering all the 28 districts. Currently monthly transfers have been made to 280,000 households with funds disbursed to beneficiaries amounting to Mk 24 billion. The SMP targets public primary schools covering 2,158,428 learners. PWPs provide cash and/or in-kind support in exchange for labour from ultra-poor and poor household members. The short-term objective is to provide consumption support, whilst the longer-term objectives include increasing the resilience of participating household members by enabling them to build and create productive assets, skills and livelihoods (Malawi National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Multiple crises and other emerging challenges Increase and Enhance the Resilience of Communities Against Climate Change	**Somalia:** To enhance resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change and improve adaptive capacity of vulnerable Somali communities and the ecosystems on which they depend, a 3 year project from 1st Jan 2015 - 1st Dec 2018 was implemented. The project was first ever to construct a sand dam in Somalia during the IPoA period and assisted the Government through the process of broad-based stakeholder consultations, analysis and consensus building to create ownership of the policies at various levels of government, within civil society and by the communities that are directly affected by the policy outcomes. In addition, the project worked with communities to develop plans for resource management and support in analyzing and mitigating risks of conflict with surrounding communities and users. In close cooperation with civil society organizations, private sector and academia several workshops and training on climate change adaptation, early warning systems and capacity building were conducted and targeted at government officials and vulnerable communities. Over 19,453 women have developed and or increased their awareness and knowledge of climate risks and adaptation responses, Additionally, 8,426 female headed households have improved access to water and livelihoods. In addition, 1,313 people benefited from short term jobs, through the construction of water harvesting structures and ecosystem-based adaptation infrastructures in the Southern Central Regions of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland. The project also conducted several workshops to improve awareness within the vulnerable communities including elders and women to strengthen coping mechanisms for climate change impact in the community and

	supported the national government including line ministries and disaster mandated institutions to prepare long term responsive strategies to climate change impact. The project substantially improved access and availability of water to vulnerable communities such as women, youth and the elderly in the pilot districts by construction of innovative medium scale water infrastructures. This innovative way of capturing the rain water and letting it seep into the wells for use during dry spells has been awarded as best practice by the Government of Puntland (UN SDGs, 2019).
Priority Area: Multiple crises and other emerging challenges Construction of Extensive Disaster Mitigation Infrastructure Including Early Warning Systems	**Vanuatu:** During Cyclone Pam that hit Vanuatu in 2015, short text messages to alert the population were sent at three-hour intervals, and then hourly as the cyclone came nearer. This allowed the population to take the necessary preventive measures. The flow of meteorological and remote sensing data into Vanuatu's ICT network was critical for early warning and saving lives despite the severe destruction caused by the cyclone (UN-OHRLLS, 2018). **Chad:** Applying the Model of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites to Promote Peace in the Lake Chad Basin through the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (BIOPALT) Project, aims to provide a multisectoral response by UNESCO to the issues of safeguarding Lake Chad, promoting peace and reducing poverty. The Lake Chad Basin is an important source of freshwater for more than 40 million people living in the four countries surrounding it: Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Niger, and Nigeria. To provide solutions for the Lake Chad Basin, a financing agreement was signed between UNESCO and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in 2017 to fund the BIOPLAT project. This project is a component of the Program to Rehabilitate and Strengthen the Resilience of Lake Chad Basin Systems (PRESIBALT), funded by the African Development Bank. The funding agreement covers the project's implementation over a three-year period for a total of $6,456,000 via a multi-sectoral and multidimensional approach. The BIOPALT project will concretely provide early warning systems for droughts and floods to strengthen the resilience capacities of local communities to climate change (SDG 13), train 300 policymakers, scientists and community leaders and mobilize 30,000 lake residents for the peaceful management of natural resources and water (SDGs 6 and 15), to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems such as ponds, oases and flood plains (SDG 15), to implement income-generating activities based on green economy to improve the livelihoods of local communities (SDGs 1, 8) and to promote transboundary inscription of the lake as a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site (UN SDGs, 2019b).

Priority Area: Multiple crises and other emerging challenges Emerging issues: Covid 19 Coronavirus Disease	As of mid-November 2020, 45 LDCs had reported positive cases of Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), with a total of 879,638 confirmed cases, (with 443,434 from Bangladesh alone) and a total number of 15,157 deaths. In general, LDCs account for a small but rising per cent of global cases and and global deaths. These low figures in comparison to global averages may not be an accurate reflection of the reality, as a low rate of reported infections can also be a consequence of LDCs' inadequate testing capacity. Of the 41 LDCs reporting cases, 33 countries have now confirmed local transmission (Johns Hopkins University, 2020) Countries have put in place various measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic socially and economically. Closure of all educational institutions (Ethiopia), bans on all public gatherings with more than 300 people (Mozambique) and suspension of all international flights (Djibouti) are a few of the measures were initially implemented. In Rwanda, cabinet ministers and tops officials have donated their April salaries to support the cost of fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The Government is also distributing food to the most vulnerable citizens who rely on daily income to survive (BBC News Africa, 2020). Development partners have also been assisting LDCs in the fight against Covid-19. WHO and UNDP are helping countries to prepare for, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP is already working to support health systems in Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar (UNDP, 2020). The IMF approved $109 loan to Rwanda to help tackle the spread of coronavirus. The World Bank approved a fast-track $100 million financing to help Bangladesh prevent, detect, and respond to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and strengthen its national systems for public health emergencies (World Bank, 2020a). There has also been a rise in entrepreneurial innovation amongst citizens. Two students from the University of Uganda have developed a hands-free hand washing device to promote safe hygiene and save water during the Covid -19 pandemic. The device works by using sensors and a solar powered battery controller. The device currently costs $24 to produce and is being used across the university campuses (BBC News Africa, 2020).
Priority Area: Mobilising financial resources for development and capacity building Growing Importance of Remittances to LDCs:	**Bangladesh:** The Bangladesh Electronic Funds Transfer Network (BEFTN) was established on 28 February 2011 in order to swift delivery of remittances to beneficiaries through bank-to-bank clearing systems. Mobile network providers and microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Bangladesh collaborated to deliver remittances from migrant workers to recipients in remote rural households. To mitigate the burden of increased expenses in

Implementing Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks for Effective Diaspora/Migrant Remittance Management	sending foreign remittance and to encourage bringing in foreign remittances through legal channels, the Government announced in the 2019-20 budget that the remitters would get 2% incentive on their remitted money. In 2014, to speed up processing times, the government advised all bank branches to provide remittances to beneficiaries of their clients within maximum two working days instead of 72 hours. To encourage women participation in overseas employment, the government has taken some initiatives like training programs and ensuring safe work environment. For skills development, 70 Technical Training Centre (TTC) at district level have been set up across the country. A Safe Home was created by WEWF for women expatriates in Saudi Arabia and Oman if they feel their lives risky in abroad and return home in safe. The government has provided collateral free loans for the expatriates and rehabilitation and project loans for returnee migrants As a result, the increased flow of remittances have led to overwhelming socio-economic benefits such as improved education and healthcare provision for expatriate family members, financially empowered women, entrepreneurship development especially in rural areas, expatriates' construction of buildings and ability to buy property and land has increased, increased propensity to save. Overall, remittances have strengthened the current account balance and lowered the unemployment level and alleviating poverty. According to the 2019 World Bank Migration and Development Brief, Bangladesh stood at 9th position among the world's top ten remittance earner countries and 3rd in South Asian region in 2018. **Bhutan:** In 2016, the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan launched Remit Bhutan - to provide a platform for Non-Resident Bhutanese to remit their savings and earnings to Bhutan through the formal banking channel. Between 2016 and 2017, inward remittances grew by nearly 55 percent. **Gambia:** Since 2012, remittances constitute The Gambia's most influential source of development finance inflow. The Gambia ranks second to Liberia in the ECOWAS region, receiving 26.1 percent of GDP from remittances. While the value of remittances is high and it has been an important source of external funds to help recipient households, the country has not focused yet on identifying opportunities to also leverage it for development finance. As a result, while the remittances are financing present consumption, funding from the diaspora is not going towards long-term capital expenditures such as major infrastructure projects. Key enabling

	factors such as the lack of capital markets and targeted programmes are major hindrances. To take appropriate measures to better utilize knowledge, skills and earnings of the returning migrants and To ensure remittances are better organised and restructured, the government established the “Diaspora Fund” and a “Diaspora Bond” to maximise use of remittances. **Lesotho:** In March 2015, the Shoprite cross-border money transfer service was launched in Lesotho to enable Basotho living in South Africa to send money to and from Lesotho. Since then the Loti volume of transfers through this service have increased by an impressive 10 % between 2015 and 2018. In the first part of 2019, remittances received through the Shoprite and Mobile Money transfers were about US$13 million. Given the increasing number of Basotho working in South Africa, this service is likely to continue increasing remittances, which play a part in countering the declining SACU receipts. **Liberia:** Remittances are one of the major sources of foreign exchange in the Liberian economy. These remittances are the major source of livelihood for about 45 percent of Liberians who are unemployed. To take appropriate measures to better utilize knowledge, skills and earnings of the returning migrants, The Central Bank of Liberia instituted an inward remittance policy which requires 25 percent of remittance to be converted to the Liberian dollars. This policy was used to provide the Central Bank of Liberia with foreign exchange liquidity. Prior to this policy, the full amount of inward remittances were paid in United Stated Dollars. **Zambia:** Performance in terms of remittances over the review period continued on a positive trajectory. The value of remittances increased from US$ 46.2 million in 2011 to US$106.97 in 2018, though with a steep dip in 2016 at US$ 38.46 million. The volume of remittances, on the other hand, showed a steady increase from 246,318 in 2011 to 502,386 in 2018. To harness the potential of the diaspora, including promotion of remittances. The Zambian Government in April 2019 adopted the Diaspora Policy to create an effective framework for engaging the Zambian Diaspora. Among the policy objectives is the promotion, facilitation and leveraging of remittances as well as lowering of costs of sending remittances by the diaspora. Another important objective is the provision for dual citizenship for Zambians, in accordance with the 2016 Constitution, including for children born in the Diaspora, and re-acquisition of citizenship for Zambians who had lost or renounced their citizenship. It is hoped that with the implementation of these measures, the level of remittances should improve going forward.

Priority Area: Good governance at all levels Strengthening Good Governance, the Rule of Law and Human Rights	**Uganda:** During the IPoA implementation period, Uganda strengthened good governance through human rights. The Ugandan Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was established under Article 51 of the Constitution to handle human rights related cases as part of the measures of good governance. Since its inception in 2010/11 the UHRC has successfully created awareness on human rights. UHRC investigated 530 cases in 2010/11, 817 in 2015/16 and 287 in 2017/18. In 2015/16 a significant 3289 complaints were registered. Between FY2010/11 and FY2017/18, the number of registered complaints reduced by 30% from 797 to 556 respectively. Uganda is a signatory to most core international and regional human rights treaties. In 2017 and 2018, Uganda ratified a total of 9 treaties. In 2012, Uganda passed the law on the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture criminalizing torture and giving effect to the obligation of Uganda as a state party to the UN CAT (Uganda National Report, 2019). **Burkina Faso:** The efforts of the Government of Burkina Faso in promoting good governance and the rule of law have resulted in the adoption and implementation of several initiatives including: 1) National Justice Policy (2010-2019); 2) National Human Rights and Civic Promotion Policy (2013-2022); 3) Political "Justice and Human Rights" (2018-2027). Since 2011, initiatives for the introduction of human rights education in educational and public vocational schools has been implemented. As a result, 119 human rights promotion clubs have been set up in 11 regions (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019). The Government of Zambia, also made efforts to ensure the inclusion of human rights into school curriculums from primary to secondary levels of education as well as Defence and Security divisions of Government. Zambia has created an enabling environment for other stakeholders such as civil society organisations to undertake human rights education and awareness activities countrywide (Burkina Faso National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Good governance at all levels E-Governance: Integrating ICT into Governance to Improve Public Service Delivery	**Bangladesh:** In Bangladesh, all interactions between the government, citizens and service provider have been digitalized under the auspices of "Digital Bangladesh". Such services include e-tax, e-transportation and e-health. The provision of e-governance has made public administration fast and effective, provided better services and response to the demands for transparency and accountability. E-governance has also enhanced economic growth and promoted social inclusion of disabled and vulnerable groups in society. As a result, Bangladesh's E-Government Readiness Index (EGDI) score improved to 0.2757 positioning the country from 150th to 148th among 193 countries in the 2012 survey.

	Bhutan: Bhutan has made mentionable progress in e-governance moving from 152nd to 143rd position in the EGDI. To enhance access to services, the government implemented the Government-Citizen Project. Resulting in 155 services available online and 19 mobile ready applications. The digitalization of public services has improved access and strengthened collaborative efforts among entities. **Lesotho:** In 2013/14 the Government of Lesotho initiated the "Lesotho E-Government Infrastructure Project", with the aim to enhance good governance by the deployment of a modern and secure E- Governance broadband infrastructure. The project has enhanced coordination across ministries, key agencies and local governments and it has also strengthened government data centres and portals. As a result, provision of e-services such as automated administrative services including e-payroll, civil registration, e-health, e-procurement, e-customs and revenue management have improved (Lesotho National Report, 2019). **Liberia:** With assistance from USAID, the Government of Liberia connected 41 ministries and agencies to the E-Governance platform to improve productivity and service delivery and boost government capacity to increase domestic revenue generation capacity. The ICT sector in Liberia is still challenged however, with weak policy and regulatory framework, inadequately trained personnel, limited ICT infrastructure and unstable and inadequate supply of electricity to enhance productivity in the sector (Liberia National Report, 2019).
Priority Area: Good governance at all levels Eliminating Corrupt Practices Through Various Reforms, Practices and Participation	**Ethiopia:** A series of training and awareness creation activities were undertaken to tackle issues of corruption and maladministration. In 2017/18, the Ethiopian Anti-Corruption Commission investigated 10,172 applications and prosecuted on 9,086. As a result, a commendable 40 million Birr (approx. USD$ 1.235 million) was returned to the government treasury from the culprits. **Uganda:** In 2018, the President of Uganda, H.E. Mr Yoweri Museveni launched a new Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) under the Office of the President that receives and acts on complaints related to corruption. By October 10th, the ACU had received 58,400 corruption complaints of which 8,022 have been concluded, 4,017 are still underway and another 35,280 cases have been referred to relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies for administrative management. As a result of these policies, Uganda's position under the macro Transparency International 2019 ranking improved from 151st to 149th out of 180 countries and territories. The Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) developed and implemented an anti-corruption strategy to guide on efforts aimed at fighting corruption

	across all institutions. This has led to an increase in the disposal rate or corruption against those registered at the anti-corruption division. **Senegal:** To the fight against corruption, money laundering and non-transparency. The government introduced performance-based budgeting and decentralized spending authorities to ministries in accordance with guidelines from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). At the institutional level, the National Financial Information Processing Unit (CENTIF), the Court of Suppression of Illicit Enrichment (CREI), the General State Inspectorate (IGE), and also the creation of the National Office to Fight against Fraud and Corruption (OFNAC), were established to reflect a significant change in the legal system dedicated to the fight against corruption. Between 2015 and 2018, the country ranked 10th out of 54 countries in the Mo Ibrahim African Governance Index. Unlike other countries in the region, cases of corruption in Senegal are decreasing. The Organic Law on Finance Laws (OLFL) was approved in July 2011 and a transparency code was adopted in 2013 to establish the key principles of budget management. Senegal's ranking in Transparency International's Corruption perception index has improved significantly in recent years: from 143rd in 2011 to 124th in 2014 (out of 175), it rose to 61st in 2015 (out of 168). In the 2018 edition, Senegal ranked 66th out of 180 countries with a score of 45/100 against 43/100 in 2015. **Vanuatu & Solomon Islands:** Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, with scores of 46 and 44 respectively, have both improved their scores since last year. With an increase of five points, the Solomon Islands successfully passed a comprehensive anti-corruption law, including provisions for a new anti-corruption commission, which led to an increased score of 5 points. Vanuatu enacted new legislation to improve access to information, opening up the government to better accountability and citizen participation, increasing its score by 3 point (Transparency International, 2019).

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The Office mobilises international support and advocates in favour of the three vulnerable country groups, raising awareness about the economic, social and environmental potential that exists and ensuring that the pressing needs of the 1.1 billion poeople who live in them, remain high on the international agenda.

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