

Inaugural meeting of the LLDCs National Focal Point Network
Session 3 : Session 3: National experiences on progress in integrating the VPoA into national development and sectoral plans, in implementing the VPoA and in building coherence with the 2030 Agenda and other development frameworks
16th June, 09:00-10:30 [EST]

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am the director of policy and programme Branch of the UN Development Coordination Office. Let me thank OHRLLS for the invitation to the Inaugural meeting of the LLDCs National Focal Point Network and we as DCO highly value the continued collaboration with OHRLLS.

The challenges faced by LLDCs are becoming more acute due to the cascading impacts of the crisis confronting our world in terms of the pandemic, socio-economic impacts of the war in Ukraine and the aggravating impacts of the triple planetary crises. Hence, the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), with its six core priorities, remains critical.

In the QCPR resolution 75/233, the Member States reiterated the call to the United Nations development system to support the full and effective implementation of the VPoA for LLDCs for the Decade 2014–2024, in line with the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review of VPoA and the road map for accelerated implementation adopted by the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries on 23 September 2020. One of the guiding principles of the road map is that *'The UN system will leverage the repositioning of its Development Pillar, in particular the reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator system to better support LLDCs to accelerate national implementation of the VPoA and realize national sustainable development goals'*

So what is the UN Development Coordination Office and the reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator system?

As some of you might know, in the context of the United Nations Development System reform (GA resolution 72/279), the Member States have established a reinvigorated, independent, impartial, and empowered Resident Coordinator (RC) system that would help facilitate the emergence of a new generation of UN Country Teams and created the UN Development Coordination Office to assume managerial and oversight functions of the resident coordinator system.

So what does this mean for the UN's work at the country level ?

The UN Resident Coordinator (RC) is the highest-ranking representative of the UN Development System at the country level. RCs leads UN Country Teams and coordinate UN support to countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The Resident Coordinator is the designated representative of – and reports to – the UN Secretary-General. The key duties and responsibilities of Resident Coordinators include, among others:

- **Representing the United Nations at the highest levels of state** and, together with the relevant agency representatives, **fostering engagement** with the government, civil society, bilateral and multilateral partners, academia and the private sector,

- **Leading the UN country team (UNCT)** in consultations with the host Government to define and agree on the UN's strategic response to the government's priorities, especially by **leading and supporting** the UNCT in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework** – which articulates the priority areas of partnership between the Country and the UN development system to achieve the 2030 Agenda
- RC also leads the UN country team in the formulation of a **Common Country Analysis (CCA)**, an *independent, collective, integrated, forward-looking, and evidence-based analysis of the sustainable development context in the country-* which provides the foundation for the UNSDCF.
- **Coordinating operational activities** for development of the UN in support of the country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda;
- Leading and coordinating the response efforts of United Nations and relevant humanitarian actors in cases where **international humanitarian assistance** is required and a separate Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) or lead agency is not designated;
- Facilitating the integration of the UNCT's work with UN **peacekeeping or political missions** in conflict and post-conflict settings, so as to fully contribute to building resilience, prevention and peace, and to transition planning and management;

One of the key changes implemented with the UN development system repositioning was to provide the independent RC with a strengthened office. Each Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) – irrespective of the country situation – would have five core functions: Strategic Planner/Team Leader; Economist; Data Management and Results Reporting Officer; Communications and Advocacy Officers; Partnerships and Development Finance Officer.

In a nutshell, the Resident Coordinators and the Resident Coordinator Offices offer a gateway to the UN development system and is ideally positioned to be your first point of contact in terms of implementation of VPoA in your countries.

We are beginning to see results already form these reform efforts

I am pleased to say that LLDCs are one of the clear beneficiaries of the UN reforms. Through the UN reforms and the empowered UN Resident Coordinators and RCOs, LLDC governments are beginning to benefit from the full strength of UN technical capacities of both from resident and non-resident UN entities. Prior to reforms, the support to LLDCs from the UN were driven mostly by donor interest, but post-reforms the standardized core functions in RCOs are able to support LLDC governments just like any other countries.

UN DESA conducted a survey among Government representatives form LLDCs and found that,

In 2021, 92% of LLDC programme countries stated that UNDS's efforts align with national development needs and priorities (up from 82% in 2019).

Survey among the UN system in LLDCs show that

78% of UNCTs in LLDCs report increased collaboration among UNCT entities (up from 75% in 2020).

69% of UNCTs in LLDCs report better tailored support to national development priorities (up from 63% in 2020).

Let me briefly speak about the role already being played by RCs and UN Development System in implementation of the VPoA

Firstly, The Resident Coordinator system is already making efforts to integrate the VPoA in UN Common Country Analysis and Cooperation Frameworks. The following countries explicitly mention the VPoA in their respective Common Country Analysis (CCA)/ Cooperation Framework (CF): Kazakhstan CF (2021), Paraguay CF (2021) and Zambia CCA (2021) and several others have integrated in their CCAs/CFs topics that are closely related to the VPoA priority areas: Afghanistan CCA, Chad CCA, Ethiopia CCA, Mali CF, Mongolia CCA, Rwanda CCA and CF, Tajikistan CCA.

Secondly, RCs are making efforts to coordinate strategic initiatives around VPoA and priority areas in terms of joint programmes, policy advice/dialogues, partnership development and fundraising. While these initiatives cover all six priority areas of the VPoA, most of the initiatives focused on priority areas of “structural and economic transformation” and “regional integration and cooperation”.

[Please choose 1 or 2]

- **For example, In Afghanistan,** the most notable project is related to the maintenance of the humanitarian supply routes through border-crossings of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Uzbekistan, which includes a tariff-free import of humanitarian supplies and the maintenance of electricity provision through the engagement with the bordering countries.
- In **Chad,** the most notable project is the support in finalization of the national African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) strategy which contributes to the priority area 3 (international trade facilitation) of the VPoA.
- In **Ethiopia,** multiple members of the UNCT have been implementing the industrial parks development initiative of the country (including agro-industry parks) which aims to promote structural transformation of the economy and export trade through expansion of light manufacturing.

Thirdly, RCs are looking towards supporting the LLDC national focal points in their work in coordinating the follow-up and implementation of VPoA. I understand some of you are already in touch the UN resident Coordinators.

- **Finally, the RCs also shared some challenges related to implementation of VPoA in countries. These relate to** 1) financing and (implementation) capacity/capability; 2) characteristics of LLDCs itself and how the disparity in characteristics of LLDCs impedes the group of countries to come together 3) VPoA support structure within the United Nations System (UNS), also poses challenges, as UN agencies with specific mandates related to VPoA priority areas are not often present at the country level. **We need to think together on how to address some of these challenges.**

Way Forward

Let me conclude by saying the Resident Coordinator System stands ready to engage with the national focal points for accelerated implementation of the VPoA. I urge you to proactively reach out to the UN

resident coordinator in your country and identify strategic entry points for collaboration with the UN system.

As DCO, we will work together with OHRLLS to further guidance to RCs on how to mainstream VPOA to CCA and CFs in countries and ensure regular interaction between RCs in LLDCs to share lessons learned and showcase best practices.

Thank you for your attention.