

## **Summary Report of Meeting of National Focal Points of LDCs**

### **Aim of the meeting**

The 2023 meeting of LDC National Focal Points (NFPs) was held in New York from 11 to 12 July 2023. It aimed to take stock of the mainstreaming of the Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs for the decade 2022-2031 (DPoA) since its adoption in March 2022 and identify challenges. It also helped to determine additional support needed by building on the lessons from the 2022 meeting and the LDC5 Conference. In addition, it presented concrete tools for monitoring and mainstreaming developed by the regional commissions and other UN agencies and discussed how these can be improved.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the High-level Political Forum (HLFP) which allowed the NFPs to participate in LDC-related meetings during the Forum and interact with other stakeholders attending the Forum.

Twenty-two NFPs attended the meeting. The meeting was financed by Türkiye which attended the meeting on behalf of development partners. The UN Development Coordination Office, the Committee for Development Policy of UNDESA, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP, and the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs also attended the meeting.

### **Highlights from the interventions**

- Participants underscored awareness raising of the DPoA. They stressed that efficient follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the national, regional, and global levels are essential for the successful implantation of the DPoA. They highlighted the linkage between programming, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Participants stressed the whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approach including involvement of local communities, parliamentarians, CSOs, and the private sector to ensure inclusive participation and coherent implementation of the DPoA at the national level. It is crucial to establish clear roles and responsibilities for government at all levels and other stakeholder groups.
- Participants shared national experiences in setting up a national committee or an inter-ministerial committee to ensure effective and efficient coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the DPoA.

- Some LDCs have put in place national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the implementation of the SDGs and other regional development agendas, such as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Participants stressed the consistency between monitoring the DPoA and the 2030 Agenda and the need to align monitoring mechanisms with existing frameworks.
- Participants also noted that national implementation plans need to undergo regular reviews in order to assess their overall performance.
- There was a unanimous call for support from the UN system and OHRLLS on mainstreaming, monitoring framework, and follow-up. Participants requested more resources and tailored capacity building from the UN agencies including training on selecting indicators. A uniform framework with guidance on how to effectively align national development strategies with the DPoA was suggested.
- It was mentioned that a robust M&E framework and budget allocation are essential. Participants stressed the importance of data for effective monitoring and the challenge in data collection and data access. It was pointed out that LDCs lack reliable data and national expertise to harness the available data, and lessons learned from M&E have not been effectively utilized.
- To promote knowledge sharing on graduation among LDCs in the Asia-Pacific and Africa, participants suggested OHRLLS in collaboration with regional commissions and relevant UN entities organize cross-region workshops. Such workshops can also facilitate experience sharing among regional commissions on the development of regional roadmaps for the implementation of the DPoA.
- Participants urged early operationalization of iGRAD, particularly the service line of financing for transition and beyond.
- Participants underscored the involvement of the NFPs in the work of the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs at the country level to coordinate and facilitate project implementation.
- Participants commended the role of the network of the LDCs NFPs in coordinating national stakeholders and effective implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs at the national level.
- Participants appraised collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators and UN country teams which have provided financial and technical support for implementation of national and global development agendas.

## Opening

**H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima**, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, stressed that LDCs have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and interlinked global crises. The DPoA is a new development blueprint for LDCs to recover from the pandemic, build resilience, and achieve the 2030 Agenda. Ms. Fatima reiterated the importance of implementation of the DPoA and mainstreaming the DPoA into LDCs national development plans. She noted that successful implementation of the DPoA in LDCs hinges on efficient follow-up and monitoring mechanisms. There must be synergies among the DPoA, national plans, and SDG implementation strategies. Ms. Fatima highlighted the importance of robust national coordination mechanisms, synergies in reporting on the SDGs and the DPoA, capacity building to strengthen statistical capacities, and the proactive role of the NFPs in the effective implementation and monitoring of the DPoA at the national level. Ms. Fatima also updated NFPs on the progress of the implementation of the DPoA since the LDC5 Conference, including a roadmap to identify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of the DPoA. Ms. Fatima concluded by emphasizing that the DPoA needs to be matched by strong resolve and tangible actions on the ground, and the global community must translate commitments into actions.

**H.E. Mr. Sedat Önal**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the UN, emphasized that LDCs face numerous challenges, including poverty, inequality, limited access to services, and infrastructure deficits. External shocks further expose their vulnerabilities, requiring special attention from the international community to enhance the resilience of the LDCs. He highlighted capacity building in science, technology and innovation through the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs hosted by Türkiye. Mr. Önal called for greater support to the UN Technology Bank to enhance its efficiency. He noted that it is timely to take stock of the progress of the implementation of the DPoA after the LDC5 Conference. He mentioned that this NFPs meeting also helps promote the LDCs agenda at the SDG Summit to be held in September on the margins of the UN General Assembly. He highlighted that the ongoing negotiations for the political declaration of the SDG Summit had included references to LDCs, and the ECOSOC resolution on LDCs has been completed. Türkiye, during its ECOSOC membership, will continue to ensure priorities are accorded to LDCs issues. As Co-chair of the Group of Friends of the LDCs in New York, Türkiye together with Belgium and Qatar, will continue to support LDCs through advocacy and solidarity.

**Ms. Prathma Uprety**, Charge d Affaires, a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Nepal and Chair of the Group of LDCs, mentioned that the new Programme of Action provides a blueprint for overcoming multiple challenges hindering LDCs progress, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, climate emergency, and economic downturn. She reiterated that the DPoA is ambitious and action-oriented and efficient follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the

national level are crucial. She stressed that NFPs play a vital role in coordinating the implementation of the DPoA and provide valuable data for capacity building support. The LDC Global Coordination Bureau has made progress in promoting LDC interests and integrating the DPoA into global forums and programmes. Ms. Uprety introduced the strategic priorities of LDCs for 2023-2026 including investing maximum efforts and resources in mainstreaming and implementation of the DPoA and operationalization of its five deliverables. She stressed that adequate resources and capacity building from the UN and development partners are crucial for the successful implementation of the DPoA.

### **Session I: Updates on the status of implementation and mainstreaming of the DPoA into national development policies**

**Mr. Md. Abdul Alim**, Senior Economic Affairs Officer of OHRLLS, moderated this session. He mentioned that while the DPoA is guided by the principles of shared responsibility and mutual accountability between LDCs and their development partners, the ownership, leadership and primary responsibility for development rest with the LDCs themselves. Integration of the DPoA is first and foremost for the LDCs at the moment, and implementation needs to take place at all levels, including by LDCs as well as development partners. The successful implementation of the DPoA is contingent upon its meaningful integration into LDCs national development strategies and its timely application in relevant fields in tandem with the support of their development partners. The purpose of the session is to: (i) Catalyze a better understanding of the strategic approach of mainstreaming the DPA into national development; (ii) Take stock of national level mainstreaming efforts and identify challenges; (iii) Learn from each other on the practical ways and means to meaningfully integrate the DPoA into national development strategies in a coherent and synergized manner with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other global agreements; (iv) How the UN system, especially the OHRLLS, can support the national level integration of the DPoA; and (v) Ensure the application of the DPoA as a mutual compact between the LDCs and their development partners at the country level and regional and global levels for the sustainable development of the LDCs.

**Bangladesh** mentioned that the DPoA is a renewal of global partnerships for LDCs to eradicate poverty and achieve internationally agreed development goals. It stressed the importance of a robust follow-up and at least six years of international support following graduation from the LDC category to avoid a slipback. Graduation should be rewarded rather than punished. It appealed for strengthened international cooperation to address the ongoing global economic and political crises in LDCs. Bangladesh has set up a National Coordination and Monitoring Committee to oversee and monitor the implementation of the DPoA, and it is developing a National Action Plan that involves all ministries. Concerned ministries have mapped out respective implementation plans in alignment with the eighth Five-Year Plan, Vision 2041, and the SDGs. Bangladesh further

shared its experience in building partnerships with “Development Partners” for external resource mobilization and technical support, and coordination with Development Partners through the Local Consultative Group. The country stressed the importance of engaging the private sector, the civil society organizations (CSOs), the Development Partners (DPs), and the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to coordinate and ensure coherence of implementation. It also mentioned the annual review of the implementation of the DPoA and the need to update on the progress.

**Bhutan** stated that the DPoA aligns with Bhutan’s long-term agenda and the 13th National Development Plan. It has integrated the DPoA into national plans with specific goals, key performance indicators, objectives, outputs, and outcomes. Bhutan’s goal is to graduate by 2024. Its graduation process is people-oriented and geared towards prosperity. Extensive consultations and dialogues have taken place with the involvement of government at all levels and various stakeholders including CSOs to ensure comprehensive participation. Bhutan focuses on environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and poverty eradication. It provides affordable housing for low-income groups and has taken measures to ensure sustainable population growth. Bhutan ensures fair access to essential and affordable foods and medical assistance. This measure will increase the human capital index from 0.475 in 2020 to 0.71 by 2034. It has established a responsive and comprehensive social protection system to ensure equitable access to healthcare and education for all. Bhutan shared national experience in streamlining government agencies for economic transformation in key areas such as productivity, hydropower and renewable energy, and private sector development. Bhutan is committed to remaining carbon negative. It stressed the importance of resilience building, connectivity including digital connectivity, infrastructure development, institutional development, and community building.

**Burkina Faso** stated that it faces challenges in integrating the DPoA into its national development plans due to low revenue and limited industrialization. Burkina Faso's national development plan encompasses four key pillars namely security, institutional reforms, human capital, and economic growth. The country aims to achieve economic transformation by boosting productivity in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery, development of small and medium-sized manufacturing industries, export diversification and accelerating demographic transition. The DPoA is operationalized in Burkina Faso through the second National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES 2021-2025). All the areas of the DPoA are more or less covered in the PNDES through the following areas: (i) Consolidate resilience, security, social cohesion and peace; (ii) Deepen institutional reforms and modernize public administration; (iii) Consolidate the development of human capital and national solidarity; and (iv) Boost economic and job-creating sectors. Burkina Faso called for more experience sharing among LDCs, and solidarity and commitment of partners to achieve structural transformation.

**Burundi** prepared a new vision for becoming an emerging economy by 2040 and achieving full development by 2060 respectively. The vision focuses on five pillars with objectives and targets encompassing effective economy, social cohesion, sustainable development, and fruitful partnerships. It was noted that the political commitment of the government is crucial for realizing this vision, which draws inspiration from the DPoA and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union. Burundi has conducted several high-level ministerial meetings on the effective integration of the DPoA into national development plans.

**Central African Republic** noted that the government needs to catch up in implementing the DPoA. The main vision of the country is to achieve a diversified, sustainable, harmonious economy. Poverty reduction is a priority of its national development plan which has been aligned with the SDGs for better programming and efficient follow-up. This is supported by a national peacebuilding and recovery plan for 2021-2030. As an LDC and an LLDC, the country pays attention to incorporating different programmes such as the DPoA and the next Programme of Action for LLDCs to be adopted in Kigali next year into national development programmes. Restoring peace and security remains a priority for the country to develop the productive sector. The country implemented policies to support agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and the extractive industry. To achieve African cohesion, the Council of Ministers created a new plan of action to set up a free trade zone. A national programme for connectivity has been put in place, which has improved digital connectivity in rural areas and with neighboring countries of Cameroon and Congo.

**Chad** opted to allocate coordination and follow-up of international and regional development programmes to the Ministry of Planning. It is in the course of developing a strategy to integrate the DPoA into its national agenda and implement it. It created a new office under the Ministry of Planning for follow-up and coordination of domestic and international development agendas. Chad's national development plan has four pillars: (i) Bolstering national unity; (ii) Strengthening good governance and the rule of law; (iii) Developing a diversified and competitive economy; and (iv) Improving the quality of life of the population. It has promulgated the 2030 Vision, a strategic framework of sustainable development in Chad, which is supported by national development plans. The country is in transition and is adjusting some of the national development agendas due to the passing of the President. The country is making efforts to integrate provisions of global development agendas including the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the VPoA, and the DPoA into national development plans. To date, 70% of the SDGs have been integrated into national development plans. Development financing and resource mobilization are the biggest challenges for the implementation of the DPoA. Other challenges include a lack of reliable data and access

to ICTs. It appealed for assistance for good governance, human capital development and industrialization.

**The Gambia** developed a national development plan which is built on seven pillars: (i) Building resilience to economic shocks and crises, corresponding to Priority #5 of the DPoA; (ii) Governance reforms, corresponding to Priority #6; (iii) macroeconomic stability and growth, corresponding to Priority #3; (iv) Human capital development, corresponding Priority #2; (v) Agriculture, environment, natural resources and climate change, corresponding to Priority #2; (vi) Empowerment, social inclusion and leaving no one behind, corresponding to Priority #1; and (vii) Energy, infrastructure and connectivity, corresponding to Priority #4. In partnership with the UN system in Gambia, the country is preparing a national strategy to implement the DPoA which needs to forge a synergy with the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The country stressed the disruption of the service sector and the food supply caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. It mentioned that the country has reviewed its achievements, challenges, and setbacks in the implementation of the IPOA. The plan also focused on addressing economic, environmental, and social aspects of sustainable development with a strong emphasis on governance. The new strategy for the implementation of the DPoA will be built on lessons learned.

**Guinea-Bissau** stated that they would work on mainstreaming the DPoA into their national development agendas soon after the formation of a new government. The country will develop its development programme for the next four years, and begin reconstituting its focal point network as soon as the new officials are in place. It is in the course of identifying a focal point to convene a meeting to share information and review provisions of the DPoA. The country will ensure priority areas of the DPoA be incorporated into its new development programme, and aligned with the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

**Haiti** appreciated the opportunity to attend the LDC5 Conference in Doha, Qatar which provided an opportunity to discuss ways and means to achieve sustainable development. It was mentioned that unless provisions of the DPoA be effectively mainstreamed into national development programmes, the DPoA runs the risk of remaining a framework. A workshop was held in Haiti to identify priority areas of the SDGs and the DPoA a few weeks ago. The country is revising the National Strategic Development Plan and integrating the six focus areas of the DPoA into this plan. The Plan will also be aligned with sectoral programmes, and address peace and security, good governance, the rule of law and inclusive growth. It is envisioned to play a significant role in driving sustainable development at home. Haiti is drawing a roadmap for all stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, and financial institutions. Environment and climate change were highlighted. The country is in a political transition. Faced with multiple crises, the

country is proceeding towards a general election. The continuity of the work is a challenge amongst political instability and rampant insecurity.

**Lao PDR** has been given an extended transition of 5 years and will graduate in 2026 despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. It collaborated closely with Bangladesh and Nepal during the LDC5 Conference to work on graduation and the mainstreaming process. At present, it is finalizing the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) after a joint validation workshop with the office of the UN RC in the country. The STS will be tabled to the government for adoption in early August. The DPoA has been initially streamlined into the national planning process, which has laid the foundation for smooth and sustainable graduation. The country noted that the DPoA will help the government, development partners, and relevant stakeholders to stay focused on development priorities by addressing the most pressing needs and challenges that may disrupt the country's graduation process. Finally, the country emphasized that graduating from the LDC category and implementation of the DPoA require firm commitments and concrete actions by LDC governments and the international community. On the monitoring mechanism, it stressed that the NFPs need capacity building, guidance and support from OHRLLS to enhance the national monitoring framework.

**Lesotho** stressed that the full and effective implementation of the DPoA depends on the LDCs. The government has established partnerships with stakeholders such as development partners, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector to raise awareness about the DPoA and promote its integration. The process involves identifying areas where the DPoA can be integrated into national policies and strategies, and provides information on how the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework can be crafted to support the implementation of those national plans. The country localizes the DPoA and prioritizes its provisions, targets and indicators that have more functional linkages to national priorities and those with higher multiplier effect. To ensure effective mainstreaming and monitoring, it is essential to have robust institutional frameworks and allocate budget and establish clear roles and responsibilities for government at all levels and other stakeholder groups. It is also important to identify a policy mix and potential DPoA accelerators. Lesotho also faces budgetary constraints and considerable challenges, including data collection and analysis, generating reports, inadequate capacity, and financial and technical constraints. The country is utilizing the existing institutional frameworks and the decentralized planning system within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to ensure plans of various agencies are aligned with the DPoA. The country suggested setting up functional platforms or networks to facilitate the implementation of the DPoA at the national level.



**Madagascar** reviewed its progress achieved in the IPoA period, particularly the improvement of the Human Development Index (HDI) which was raised from 0.511 (2018) to 0.528 (2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has wiped out progress and resulted in unprecedented economic contraction in 2021. Therefore, the implementation of the DPoA is very timely, which helps to put the country back on track for sustainable development. The country has incorporated the 6 priority areas of the DPoA into its national development strategy with the participation of key stakeholders. A matrix has been developed that contains priority domains such as investment in human capital, health and education for all, empowerment of women and youth, social development, agricultural productivity and environment. The country also suffered multiple challenges, such as a lack of resources and international shocks leading to food insecurity. In addition, climate change has further affected its economic development. It called for more development assistance since the current ones are insufficient.

**Malawi** stated that the Malawi 2063 is a long-term national development plan which is aligned with the SDGs. It was mentioned that in domesticating the DPoA, efforts have been made to raise awareness of different stakeholders, set up sector teams, identify gaps, and organize training before the development and validation of an implementation plan. There will be annual budget reviews of the implementation of the DPoA by various sectors. Community engagement is crucial. Domestication does not mean abandoning the implementation of national plans. The key challenge is bringing stakeholders into one "room" because implementation will be done by different stakeholders: government, ministries, departments, agencies, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders. The second key challenge is the technical capacity due to the need to train the stakeholders and focal points. The country enquired about access to funds especially by Qatar to ensure quick implementation and immediate results of the DPoA, and training of NFPs on mainstreaming.

**Nepal** stated that the country has made considerable progress in poverty reduction and most social indicators. However, Nepal must overcome the economy's structural challenges to increase productivity, production, and competitiveness. The key focus areas of the DPoA are used as the guiding strategies for preparing for a smooth and sustainable graduation of the country. The country is preparing a smooth transition strategy (STS) in broad consultation with all tiers of government, the private sector, CSOs, and development partners. The STS will include a detailed national action plan, incorporating the actions for implementing the DPoA. The country has set up various institutional mechanisms, such as a National Steering Committee, a National Focal Agency, Thematic Committees, and different working groups that include sectoral experts, private sectors, CSOs, development partners, and sub-national governments. Using the existing national monitoring and evaluation systems, the government is tracking the progress of the implementation by integrating the indicators of the STS and the DPoA into the indicators of SDGs

and the National Development Plan. The country is designing the 16<sup>th</sup> five-year national development plan which will be aligned with the SDGs and implementation of the DPoA. The country called for continuous international support measures for the implementation of development plans and policies.

**Sierra Leone** stated that they will work closely with the UN country team and development partners to ensure a sustainable implementation of the DPoA. The country collaborates with the Office of the Residence Coordinator in mainstreaming the DPoA and conducts high-level policy dialogues between government and development partners. The country calls the Development Partnership Committee meetings to ensure that critical issues and challenges, such as the COVID-19 crisis, are discussed and to enhance partnership and collaboration. It reiterated the need to ensure that resource constraints are addressed and that the capacity is developed across the board, especially at the sub-national level, to help the country fully mainstream and implement the DPoA. The country's national agenda will ensure alignment with the DPoA and the SDGs.

**Solomon Islands** stated that the government is currently in the seventh year of implementing its 20-year National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2035. This NDS plan maps out a strategic direction for its future development which integrates the SDGs and localizes the SDGs to the national context. The plan is currently under review after a two-year delay due to COVID and other national situations. This review is crucial for the country's smooth transition strategy and improvement of its NDS framework. The country also emphasized that the country has integrated SDGs and the DPoA into its NDS objectives. The country faces challenges including: (i) gaps in the NDS performance framework; (ii) capacity constraints; (iii) budget constraints; (iv) shorter time in 2023 to implement development programme; and (v) limited support in data management.

**Togo** has developed an NDS plan for 2018-2022 to structurally transform its economy. Due to COVID, the government must adjust its plan and adopt a new roadmap for 2020-2025. This roadmap aims to strengthen social inclusion and harmony and guarantee peace, boost job creation by relying on the strength of the economy. In addition, the roadmap seeks to modernize the country and strengthen its structure. Togo echoed the Solomon Islands and noted similar challenges such as integrating the DPoA in the Municipal Development Plans, defining indicators and targets for various commitments, establishing an effective mechanism for the coordination, monitoring, and reporting, lack of an effective data collection mechanism and sufficient funding for the preparation of national reports. The country highlighted national ownership including training on mainstreaming, integration into communal development plans, a roadmap for implementation and monitoring and a timetable for data collection.

**Tanzania** is implementing the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 (TDV 2025). The TDV 2025 aims to accelerate the transformation of the country into a semi-industrialized, middle-income nation

by 2025. The TDV 2025 is being implemented through a series of medium-term poverty reduction strategies and development plans. The country mentioned that the implementation of the DPoA coincides with its Third National Five-Year Development Plan 2021/22-2025/26 (FYDP III). The FYDP III has five priority areas: (i) human development; (ii) deepening industrialization & service provision; (iii) realizing an inclusive and competitive economy; (iv) investment and trade promotion; and (v) realizing an inclusive and competitive economy. Each priority is mapped into the DPoA focus area and has specific FYDP III interventions. A budget has been allocated to assess the implementation of the DPoA. The country is in the process of developing Tanzania Development Vision 2050 which will incorporate priorities of the DPoA. Like other LDCs, Tanzania also faced challenges such as COVID, political conflicts, inadequate data to monitor some indicators, limited budget, and global climate change. The country is making diverse efforts to stimulate economic growth, operationalize the National Strategy for Development of Statistics, enhance revenue mobilization, and protect the ecological system.

**Yemen** commended the network of LDC NFPs and its work since its inception. The country noted that by the end of the IPoA, many LDCs including those who have graduated are still facing development challenges. The DPoA has adopted new strategies to boost development, strengthen financing mechanisms for technology transfer, and enhance international cooperation, which puts the LDCs back on the path of sustainable development. The government noted that the country's economy has shrunk by half due to a lack of rule of law and terrorist attacks. The government undertook many reforms to buttress their institutions such as the Central Bank and the Treasury to lessen poverty and increase living standards. It has also taken active steps to develop more resilient private sectors to improve citizens' income, food security, and nutrition. To achieve SDGs, Yemen calls for prioritizing social economic and environmental strategies, finding new mechanisms to address the effects of disasters or conflicts, rebuilding infrastructure, strengthening international cooperation, and technical and financial assistance including technology transfers. In the end, the country emphasized the negative impact of global climate change. The LDCs are the most affected, and they have extremely limited resources in addressing the consequences. Yemen calls for shared but differentiated responsibility and enhanced assistance to help LDCs in mitigation and adaptation efforts.

**Zambia** mentioned that the DPoA is one of the key frameworks used in formulating its 8th National Development Plan (NDP) 2022-2026. The country shared some strategies for aligning the DPoA six focus areas with its NDP. These strategies include: (i) development of education, health, interventions to address poverty and inequalities (including gender inequalities); (ii) enhancing digital capacity and promoting research, science, technology, and innovation; (iii) enhancing economic transformation and job creation; (iv) trade and regional integration; (v) dedicating strategic development areas on environmental sustainability; and (vi) setting up a macro-economic framework to enhance resource mobilization. The government has designed

implementation plans at the national, provincial, and district levels. The 8th DNP helps advance progress towards the SDGs under one framework. This has enabled the country to rally stakeholders and manage various reports on the implementation of different development agendas. It has also set up an elaborate implementation and coordination mechanism where state or non-state actors rally behind the development agenda. In terms of challenges, Zambia calls for a uniform framework that provides guidance on how to effectively align its national development strategies with the DPoA. This way, the LDCs can approach the issue of mainstreaming and alignment in a uniform manner, and the countries can see the development progress and compare among themselves. The other challenges include data capacity and awareness raising of the LDC programme. The government updated the country's progress towards graduation including the graduation assessment produced by DESA and the vulnerability profile compiled by UNCTAD.

## **Session II: Follow-up and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the DPoA at all levels**

**Mr. Aniket Ghai**, Senior Economic Affairs Officer of OHRLLS moderated the session. In his presentation on monitoring framework and plans to take it forward at a global level, he highlighted (i) the consistency between monitoring of the implementation of the DPoA and the 2030 agenda; (ii) aligning monitoring mechanisms with existing frameworks; (iii) support from UN country teams and country level teams of WB (World Bank), IMF (International Monetary Fund), and other multilateral institutions; (iv) enhancing systematic monitoring of the UN system and the interagency processes; and (v) support from the UN system and OHRLLS in terms of monitoring and follow-up. He emphasized the importance of monitoring at the national level and called for greater accountability of the UN and other international organizations and complementary monitoring at the regional and global levels.

Mr. Ghai also listed three criteria for setting indicators in the monitoring framework: (i) maximizing current statistic effort to avoid duplication; (ii) avoiding additional burden on national statistical offices and the UN entities; and (iii) indicators that can be updated every one to three years and that are available for the LDCs. A few monitoring and implementation tools are already developed, such as the annual Secretary General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs, accompanied by an online statistical annex; the Interagency Consultative Group (IACG) on LDCs, SDG database, and other internationally recognized authoritative sources. The IACG on LDCs is drafting a monitoring framework for the DPoA with indicators for major targets of the DPoA.

**Mr. Bartholomew Armah**, Chief, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) made a presentation on the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT). The IPRT is a web-based planning tool that

digitizes national development plans to facilitate performance tracking of NDPs (National Development Plan) and their alignment with global and continental frameworks. The IPRT seeks to map the relationship between the SDGs and the Agenda 2063. It includes performance tracking, intelligent dashboards, data visualization, and it generates reports and gives a diagnostic of results framework. IPRT has the following features: (i) *Horizontal alignment*: It maps Agenda 2030 onto Agenda 2063 to identify synergies and areas of divergence at goal, target and indicator levels; (ii) *Vertical alignment*: It assesses the degree of alignment at goal, target and indicator level. It maps financing frameworks onto development priorities and provides a diagnostic of the results framework; (iii) *Performance tracking*: It tracks the performance of the NDPs and assesses gaps between actual performance and targets, and it tracks budget commitments against national development targets; and (iv) *Automated reporting*: It generates reports on the alignment of both agendas with the NDPs and reports on NDP indicator performance against the targets.

Mr. Armah noted that LDCs face the challenge of aligning multiple agendas coherently with their NDPs. He stressed the importance of aligning the NDPs with the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 and setting goals, targets and indicators in the results framework.

The Integrated Financing Frameworks (INFFs) have four components: (i) assessing and diagnosing the financing situation; (ii) developing a financing strategy. Part of the financing strategy is to link the finances to development priorities; (iii) monitoring and reviewing the strategy; and (iv) governance and coordination.

Mr. Armah noted some cross-cutting challenges: (i) the need to avoid alignment bias in favour of a few Agendas; (ii) the need to align beyond the goal level but also at the target and indicator level; (iii) the need to strengthen results frameworks to enhance performance tracking; (iv) the need to improve access to performance tracking data; and (v) the need to align budgets to DPoA priorities. Mr. Armah shared the [IPRT](#) website and demonstrated various important tools of IPRT.

During Q&A, **Sierra Leone** raised the issue of biases towards the SDGs and how to forge synergies to ensure adequate funding for monitoring the implementation of the DPoA. The country also asked whether the ECA compares national budgets over time based on different currencies, and whether the toolkit has a currency converter built into its module. Mr. Armah explained that the biases can be mitigated. He used Uganda as an example where the ECA has conducted two analyses two years apart. There is an improvement in alignment after the second analysis, since the first analysis had shown the misalignment in a more disaggregated way. There is a need to create evidence-based evaluations, and after that, the ECA can help countries understand better why it is not aligned and what the country can do to improve the alignment. As to the national budgets, the information is provided in local currency. However, the country has the option to use the current exchange rate and convert the currency at any point in time.

**Liberia** was interested in which instrument a country should use, among goals, targets, and indicators, to measure if a country is performing well in terms of alignment. Mr. Armah clarified that it depends on a country's objective. In fact, the target should be the ultimate objective of a country, whereas an indicator is a means that tells the country whether it has achieved that target. **Burundi** asked whether all Member States have access to the platform, or whether a country must sign up for it and put the data in the programme. Mr. Armah confirmed that the tool is freely available to all Member States. The ECA provided ongoing technical support to use the tool. Upon request, the ECA travels to the country and provides training to use the tool. After the training, the country has ownership of the part of the tool that is particular to the country.

**Burkina Faso** and **Lesotho** raised the issue of lack of indicators. Burkina Faso set up the IPRT in 2021. The country noted the challenge of monitoring the SDGs and the Agenda 2063 under the same tool. About 19 percent of indicators are not matched. Lesotho explained that the tool lacks targets and indicators of many frameworks to measure and track the progress on the SDGs targets. For example, the country's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) is set at the indicator level. However, about 39 SDG targets do not have corresponding indicators and most of the indicators are not disaggregated. This creates difficulties in measurement and alignment. This is due to a lack of data collection from all the LDCs. Mr. Armah explained that there could be a sequencing issue when implementing both the SDGs and their five-year national plans. The countries should prioritize certain indicators in a year and move on with new ones in the next year since a country cannot focus on all indicators at once. In addition, the country needs to understand why it chooses a particular indicator and if there is room for convergence.

**Togo** asked whether ECA provides technical support for implementing the tool and collecting data when a country submits a request, particularly when it comes to the indicators. Mr. Armah assured that ECA provides technical assistance in using the tool, and its African Centre for Statistics is also available to support countries on data issues. He stressed the importance of data access and how to harness the available data in a more coordinated way. There may be more data available than the countries think. The African Centre for Statistics of ECA can assist countries with the data issues.

**Bangladesh** recognized that efficient follow-up and monitoring mechanisms at the national, regional, and global levels are essential for the successful implantation of DPoA. The country is currently at the final stage of formulating a National Action Plan for implementing the DPoA by aligning it with the SDGs. Each line Ministry or agency has nominated a single Focal Point for both the SDGs and the DPoA to achieve a better alignment. The country has successfully implemented the IPoA and achieved relevant SDGs targets a few years back, and it is on track for graduation. It emphasized the importance of data for effective monitoring. LDCs lack reliable data, and they rely on UN agencies for training on selecting the right indicators to achieve their targets.

**Bhutan** has integrated the DPoA into its long-term national development and the 13th National Development Plan. To achieve the desired results for these plans, the country employs a result-based management approach using the national key performance indicators, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), outcomes, and output KPIs. On a yearly basis, these results are prioritized and translated into annual performance agreements. The national plans must also undergo a mid-term review (every 2.5 years) and a terminal review (every 5 years) to assess the overall performance of the plan. The country noted that the country will keep strengthening the existing national M&E (Monitoring & Evaluation) (Monitoring & Evaluation) system, and the strengthened system will monitor and evaluate: (i) the long-term plan and the 13th National Development Plan; (ii) the national policies; and (iii) the regulatory assessments and evaluations. Bhutan's M&E system also faces a few shortfalls: (i) Conducting extensive M&E is costly; and (i) There is inadequate national expertise, lack of reliable data, and insufficient usage of M&E lessons and recommendations.

**Burkina Faso** echoed the problem of lack of data. The country has set up an integrated financing framework which should be ready in the next month. However, when the country sets up a good monitoring system, it falls below their expectations for two main reasons: (i) There is a linkage issue between the programming, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation; and (ii) If LDCs do not have the proper indicators, the countries cannot monitor properly on development progress.

**Burundi** is developing its vision for "*Burundi by 2040 and Burundi by 2060*", and it is integrating the DPoA into this vision. While having an M&E mechanism for the national vision, the country has not developed one especially for the DPoA yet. It explained that the monitoring mechanism is set at two levels (i) a national coordinating committee for programmes and development, which is led by the Prime Minister; and (ii) sectorial ministries. With this follow-up mechanism, each ministry provides a report about how the vision is implemented at the end of each year.

**Central African Republic (CAR)** has a weak capacity for an institutional response in the face of uprisings. Despite these hardships, CAR has been able to establish some programmes to improve its situation. Currently, the country is going through a referendum phase and working on a new Constitution. People will vote on the new Constitution soon to establish a development policy, which will be crucial for resource mobilization and national solidarity to ensure a return to trust, security, and peace. The country called for (i) a transparent partnership and open governance for national actors to think and act for change; (ii) an intelligent, creative, innovative, and consultative regional cooperation. Assistance for good governance is much needed in the country; (iii) improved digital access, connectivity and coherence of procedures across the country; and (iv) mobilizing funds for public service projects.

**Chad** commended the support of the African Union. The country has benefited from capacity building, and it was able to establish its framework that includes a monitoring mechanism for

both the Agenda 2030 and the Agenda 2063. As a result, the country only needs to create one monitoring report, and it considers both agendas when generating many other reports. This framework allowed the country to present its issues at a continental level and the High-level Political Forum on the topics of sustainable development. It also made the work more efficient and enhanced its capacity.

**The Gambia** is also trying to align its new National Development Plan with the DPoA. It is currently on hold since the UN is finalizing the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the government. The Gambia has gone through the initiation phase in which it has presented the country context. The second phase is the planning phase, which is supported by the UN country offices. In the third phase of the assessment, the country will present the detailed review results. For the final phase, the Gambia will establish a coherent link between Agenda 2030, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and other global processes. It also mentioned issues of productive capacity in areas of energy, infrastructure, telecommunication, science and technology.

**Guinea-Bissau** has also made efforts toward integration and alignment with national development plans since the adoption of Agenda 2030 in 2015. The challenge is to ensure the same focal points who worked on the IPoA would also be working on the DPoA. Guinea-Bissau just went through an election, and it is necessary to convince the new government to adopt the same approach to ensure the integration, and have the same report used for the Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and for the DPoA.

**Haiti** is currently revamping its national development strategy, and it will integrate the DPoA into its national development strategy. There are at least three levels of mechanisms in place that will monitor the progress made (i) inter-institutional committee which is a national committee headed by the Prime Minister; (ii) ECA (Commission Economique pour l'Afrique), and (iii) participation of parliamentarians, civil society, local governments and the private sector. The country reiterated the issue of generating statistical data. Haiti called for more support from the UN in terms of monitoring and drafting the indicators.

**Lao PDR** established the National Steering Committee in 2018 as its monitoring and follow-up mechanism. This committee worked on the IPoA and will continue to work on the DPoA. The Lao PDR has integrated the works from each POA into its national social economic development plan. In addition, the Lao PDR also works closely with the UN country team under the Lao PDR UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 and other UN agencies. Although the Lao Statistic Bureau (LSB) provides data, LSB still faces challenges in capacity building for statistics decisions, the system to harmonize administrative data and national data, and the lack of funding for data collection and surveys. The Lao PDR called for more support on capacity building for the implementation of the DPoA at the national level.



**Lesotho** noted that the tools are essential in assisting countries to efficiently monitor multiple development agendas and linking them to the goals, targets and indicators of their national development plan. The tools also enable them to link their programmes and projects to national, continental, and global goals and indicators. The country pointed out that it is essential to have a robust M&E framework and budget allocation in place; the countries should prioritize the allocation of resources towards the programmes and initiatives that support the implementation of the DPoA; the monitoring of the DPoA should also be done at the sub-national level since it is critical for achieving the objectives of the programme and the overall realization of the SDGs. He raised the importance of identifying the SDG targets that are closest to the DPoA targets. He also reiterated avoiding to use of too many proxy indicators, but to identify the nationally measured indicators associated with corresponding indicators of the DPoA.

**Liberia** shared that their current National Development Plan will end in December this year, and the country is in the process of formulating a new medium term national development plan. In addition, the country has designed Vision 2030, which sets a long-term direction to achieve the middle-income status. To achieve this vision, the country formulates a medium-term national development plan in every five years. It demonstrated their follow-up and monitoring mechanism, which follows a top-down approach.

**Madagascar** mentioned that since the LDC5 Conference, it has been working on aligning national development strategy with the DPoA. The country's national system has had an integrated monitoring and evaluation system since 2008, which is comprised of indicators, results, and institutional frameworks. The government shared that the country is building a digital system with a platform where all the focal points can feed in the data. However, there is still work to do in terms of alignment, and the country needs continued support from the UN offices.

**Malawi** has set up a monitoring and evaluation framework for the national development plan, Malawi 2063, and its first ten-year implementation plan. In terms of the DPoA, the country stated, it is important to devise interventions that are in line with the country's national development strategy. The country needs to have a detailed M&D framework where it can establish a baseline. This baseline provides a benchmark for monitoring progress in the coming years. Malawi already has such a system in place, the national M&D system, where indicators are followed and properly reported on, and so the same will be used as they track its implementation of the DPoA.

**Nepal** has a national monitoring and evaluation guideline in place since 2018. The guideline includes the mechanisms, instruments, and procedures for monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes. The country noted that the National Development Action Committee and the ministerial level Development Action Committee are the key institutional mechanism for M&E. Nepal has a practice of setting key performance indicators and

milestones for every agency, which are also aligned with its annual budget plan. The country highlighted that the exchange of practices and lessons and continuous support from international agencies and communities is vital for the strengthening of the monitoring and evaluation system for effective implementation of national development.

### **Session III: Support by the UN system for the implementation, follow-up, and monitoring of the DPoA**

**Ms. Susanna Wolf**, Deputy Chief & Senior Programme Management Officer of OHRLLS, moderated the session. Ms. Wolf summarized challenges faced by the LDCs in the implementation of the DPoA mentioned during the first day of the meeting, such as climate change, mobilization of resources, capacity and ownership, limited knowledge and understanding of the DPoA, handling of multiple POAs, and the need to avoid duplication.

She highlighted key suggestions made by participants for support in the implementation of the DPoA: (i) development of a follow-up mechanism; (ii) building capacity for monitoring the implementation of the DPoA; (iii) support for statistical capacity and resources; (iv) financing for stakeholder involvement; (v) the need for framework and guidelines for mainstreaming, and (vi) the need to advocate for the priorities of LDCs. Ms. Wolf emphasized that OHRLLS and the UN system will stand ready to flag these priorities in various intergovernmental meetings, from the SDG Summit to the COP28 and at other important forthcoming meetings.

**Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal**, Director of DCO, made a presentation on the work of DCO in supporting the implementation of the DPoA. She highlighted five key roles of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the DPoA in LDCs: (i) RCs ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the SDGs and the six focus priority areas of the DPoA. The UN system has a unique integrative ability by forging conversations and dialogue across government line ministries, civil society, companies, and subnational authorities, and by bringing all the relevant stakeholders to the table; (ii) RCs act as brokers to develop partnerships and leverage resources for the implementation of the DPoA. RCs are well-positioned to help remove trust deficits, which is essential in the endeavour to reduce risk profiles of urgent investments in LDCs; (iii) RCs bring together the UNCT to offer comprehensive and coherent expertise to national governments to build national capacities to mainstream the DPoA into national development policies and planning processes and to enable its full implementation; (iv) RCs and UNCTs ensure that the implementation of the DPoA considers specific needs of those at risk of being left behind; and (v) Governments and UNCTs should make use of the UN Cooperation Frameworks (CFs), as the primary programming tool of the reinvigorated UN Development System, to ensure an

integrated approach that breaks the silos among the six key focus areas of the DPoA to maximize results.

Ms. Kalapurakal underscored the need to harness the capacities of the UN Development System through the RCs to identify innovative solutions to address some of these challenges in line with the DPoA for LDCs and the VPoA for LLDCs. UNDCO is committed to providing the best support to LDCs. She shared examples of support extended to a few LDCs by RCs and the UNCTs

During the Q&A session, **Malawi** appraised the benefit of working closely with the RC Office (RCO) in Malawi. The country wishes to work hand in hand with RCO to domesticate the DPoA. **Lao PDR** commended the contribution of the UNCT and the RCO to its social and economic development. It noted support from the UNCT and the RCO for developing the financing strategy of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Smooth Transition Strategy for graduation. **Solomon Islands** reiterated the leadership and coordination of the RC at the country level. Working closely with the RCO helped the country's preparation for graduation and the implementation of national plans. **Uganda** mentioned gaps in the implementation and monitoring of its national development plan which is in line with the SDGs and the Agenda 2030. He proposed a separate framework with clearer targets at the national level.

**Bhutan** noted that it has received tremendous technical assistance and support from the UN. It cited the example of RC's assistance in formulating the country's 13th plan and the long-term development plan and building a robust M&E system. **Tanzania** also expressed its appreciation for the support of the UN both financially and technically, especially on the preparations of their VNR this year. **Sierra Leone** echoed the message that the support of RC has been instrumental in addressing many of their national issues, including the RC co-chairing the Election Steering Committee with the Chief Minister in the recent election and creating a portal for the SDGs. **Malawi** reiterated that exchanges between the RCOs are very critical and would also be beneficial for LDCs to develop themselves.

Ms. Kalapurakal raised the challenge of serving an individual country from multi-country offices. She proposed the idea of facilitating a peer exchange among the RCs and UNCTs in LDCs in the future. She acknowledged that the development agenda is underfunded compared to humanitarian affairs, peace, and security, and stressed the effective use of limited resources. She stressed the urgency of achieving the SDGs, and appealed for increased funding for the UNDS to deliver more impactful results. Ms. Kalapurakal reassured that the DCO will continue to work closely with OHRLLS, and noted the potential to deliver more for LDCS in partnership with different entities. She encouraged the LDCs to continue to be demanding and put forward clear requests.

**Mr. Oliver Paddison**, Chief, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), made a presentation on the work of ESCAP on the implementation of the DPoA. He highlighted

the Special Body on LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS convened during annual commission sessions and the annual Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. ESCAP also conducts follow-up and review of the POA for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, and it will convene the Asia-Pacific first biennial review of the implementation of the DPoA, which will contribute to the development of a regional roadmap for the implementation of the DPoA.

In addition, ESCAP produces knowledge products and provides technical assistance and capacity building services under the DPoA's 6 key focus areas of action. It provides technical support to enhance social protection systems in LDCs and to strengthen regional cooperation on social protection in Asia and the Pacific. It supports the Asia Pacific Information Superhighway Action Plan to bridge the digital divide and accelerate digital transformation. It is working on capacity building to support the economic empowerment of women and enhancing opportunities for persons with disabilities. ESCAP is revisiting some previous standard policy advice for structural transformation taking into account the impact of COVID and geopolitical tensions. ESCAP developed a tool called Trade Intelligent and Negotiation Advisor (Tina), which allows not only LDCs but also other countries in the region to evaluate the trade impacts on graduation. It helps LDCs develop resilience in the region to develop SDG trackers and national databases Mr. Paddison pointed out that LDCs need to strengthen and increase their activities in regional value chains, and they need more evidence-based policy advice. He suggested that ESCAP and OHRLS facilitate dialogue among LDCs from different regions to promote knowledge and experience sharing on graduation.

During the Q&A session, **Mr. Armah**, Chief of ECA echoed the importance of interregional cooperation. The ECA is currently collaborating with ESCAP to design a tool called [EPiC](#) that helps design indicators for national development plans to ensure that they are streamlined.

**Togo** proposed holding experience sharing sessions among Asian and African LDCs, which will provide opportunities for African LDCs to learn from their Asian peers and accelerate transformative progress.

**Lao PDR** requested assistance from ESCAP for preparation of participation in the SDG Summit this year and of the 3<sup>rd</sup> VNR in 2024. The country inquired whether and how ESCAP could start to use the IPRT developed by ECA for the rest of the LDCs. According to Mr. Paddison, ESCAP has devised a [VNR Twinning Programme](#) since 2020, which is a peer review process for the VNR countries. ESCAP is looking into the possibility of incorporating the IPRT into its work.

**Bhutan** mentioned that one of the eight national outcomes of the current 13<sup>th</sup> national plan is the social protection system, which ensures accessible and comprehensive social protection and services for all. The country called for more technical support from ESCAP in this aspect. ESCAP

has already created a social protection toolbox specific to the Asia-Pacific region. This toolbox could also be replicated for ECA and benefit African LDCs.

**Mr. Armah** reinforced the message of collaboration between ESCAP and ECA. Regional commissions can mobilize resources collectively and hold joint missions, deepening support to the LDCs.

**Ms. Natalia Aristizabal Mora**, Inter-Regional Advisor on Financing for Sustainable Development of DESA, and **Mr. Tim Strawson**, SDG Finance Advisor of UNDP made a joint presentation on the Integrated National Financing Frameworks ([INFFs](#)). **Ms. Mora** provided an overview of INFFs, which are frameworks to help countries: (i) align their development priorities and SDGs with their financing policies; and (ii) come up with financing strategies to mobilize more resources to achieve their priorities and SDGs in a coherent way.

The INFFs is composed of four building blocks and an inception phase: (i) The Assessment and Diagnostics building block helps countries to assess their needs in terms of financing, the risks the financing policies, and the binding constraints countries may face when trying to implement the financing policies; (ii) The Financing Strategy building block is about how to design the financing strategy, how to decide which policies should be prioritized, how to decide which options to adopt, making the coherence checks with all the mentions of sustainability; (iii) The Monitoring and Review building block is about establishing mechanism to monitor effectiveness of policies included in the financing strategy so that countries could make amendments when necessary; (iv) The Governance and Coordination building block is about how to set the institutional arrangements that oversee the implementation of the INFFs; and (v) The Inception Phase is the first step of INFFs which is about establishing the baseline where countries are in terms of these four building blocks so that they can come up with a roadmap to roll out their INFFs.

Ms. Mora reiterated that INFFs help to: (i) mobilize financing resources to achieve the development priorities and the SDGs; (ii) enhance coherence across financing policies; (iii) better manage risk and an increasingly complex financing landscape; (iv) better articulate development cooperation needs and enhance transparency; and (v) streamline the wide variety of tools offered by the international community to support national action.

INFFs provide various technical support. For example, DESA led the development of practical guidance on INFFs on the four building blocks and inception phase, which was published in 2021. Currently, DESA is working on more detailed guidance pertaining to financing areas and targeting certain countries. Ms. Mora mentioned that a guidance on SIDS has already been published, and a guidance on LDCs is on its way. This guidance lays out common challenges faced by countries when financing or mobilizing resources, and it also provides recommendations for countries and development partners. She emphasized that a good inception phase is key to the rollout of INFFs.

In the inception phase, countries need to: (i) consider the governance conditions; (ii) understand the absorptive capacity of the government in the country; (iii) ensure effective development cooperation; (iv) be pragmatic; and (v) expect setbacks and staff changes. The guidance gives three essential recommendations for the rollout of INFFs in LDCs: (i) Building on existing systems and knowledge; (ii) Prioritizing; and (iii) A phased approach.

**Mr. Tim Strawson** emphasized the importance of country-led exercises in light of varying financing and SDG challenges, institutional capacity and dynamics of respective countries. INFFs are implemented in 86 countries of which 32 are LDCs, and 16 are at the stage of developing a financing strategy. Countries are pursuing a comprehensive set of financial reforms and opportunities for resource mobilization across public and private finance. Domestic resource mobilization, public expenditure, and public budgets are the foundation of any country's financing strategy for sustainable development; however, private capital is also crucial in a country's development. Countries such as Cambodia, Tanzania, and Uganda are taking forward INFFs with their financing innovations and benefiting from exchanges of experience.

In Lao PDR, the country implements innovative approaches to mobilize resources through tax and to ensure sustainability through tax. In Djibouti, given its extreme debt distress, it focuses on domestic resource mobilization. In Comoros, it has linked INFFs to its 10-year Plan, and it sets out reforms designed to double its domestic revenue.

UNDP has launched an INFFs facility across multiple entities, including the UN, OECD, and numerous other development partners. This facility provides technical support where countries can draw innovations within INFFs and learn across countries. Mr. Strawson also shared resources on INFFs, and highlighted UNDP's focus on managing knowledge across country experiences for ease of access to innovations by all countries.

During the interactive discussion, **Chad** affirmed that the INFFs is an important tool for the LDCs. The country shared challenges in setting up a national framework for INFFs and experience in launching a National Committee for INFFs. It commended that the presentation on INFFs has deepened his understanding of this tool, and mentioned that a better understanding of INFFs could help convince the relevant departments to adopt this tool in Chad.

**Lao PDR** shared their experiences with the INFFs. Lao PDR launched its financing strategy for the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025, which covers eight industries. Lao PDR also has designed the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS). The country mentioned the Enhanced Monitoring Mechanism ([EMM](#)) which helps monitor some of the key indicators and ensures Lao PDR to stay on track to graduate in 2026.

## **Session IV: Support for graduation--Sustainable Graduation Support Facility – iGRAD**

**Ms. Margherita Musollino-Berg**, Senior Programme Management Officer of OHRLLS, moderated the session. Ms. Musollino updated participants on the progress of graduation of LDCs. To date, 6 LDCs have graduated, and 16 LDCs are at varying stages of graduation including 6 LDCs in Africa, 7 in Asia and 3 in the Pacific. She noted that iGRAD is a new sustainable graduation facility aimed to provide strengthened and tailored support for LDCs to achieve sustainable and irreversible graduation thanks to the joint efforts of DESA/CDP, the Inter-agency Taskforce for Graduation and UN Resident Coordinators in LDCs. It is one of the five deliverables of the DPoA. Fundraising efforts are underway to kickstart the facility. Ms. Musollino-Berg also updated participants on the progress and fundraising efforts of the other four deliverables of the DPoA, i.e. the online university, the Investment Support Center for LDCs, a food stock holding system and the resilience-building mechanism. The NFPs are encouraged to remain engaged throughout the process.

**Ms. Mereseini Bower**, Inter-Regional Advisor of the DESA/CDP Secretariat, made a presentation on iGRAD and its six main service offering lines: (i) Addressing the loss of existing international support measures; (ii) Improving the ability to graduate and graduated countries to access non-LDC specific support; (iii) Preparing and implementing smooth transition strategy; (iv) Assisting in accessing financing transition and beyond; (v) South-South cooperation and dialogue in sharing country and region specific knowledge and experience; (vi) Ensuring effective participation in the effective monitoring process of the CDP.

Ms. Bower also shared other resources on LDC graduation and LDC support measures such as the *LDC Handbook* (<https://bit.ly/2021-LDC-handbook>); the LDC website (<https://bit.ly/CDP-LDCs>); and the LDC portal (<https://www.un.org/ldcportal>).

During the Q&A session, **Bhutan, Uganda and Tanzania** enquired about access to iGRAD facilities, the duration of the support and the transition period, and financing for the operationalization of the facility. It was mentioned that iGRAD services are accessible to graduated countries at least for the first 5 years during the transition period. Extension can be discussed on a bilateral basis as the transition period varies from country to country. DESA/CDP and OHRLLS can help LDCs pair with graduating LDCs and graduated countries to promote peer learning such as experiences in the implementation of the INFFs. iGRAD will provide coordinated, demand driven and country-led support to LDCs that have reached the graduation threshold. At present, it is implemented on a pilot basis. Financing for the operationalization of iGRAD is crucial, and iGRAD needs voluntary contributions from donor countries. OHRLLS and the High Representative for LDCs are committed to fundraising for the full operationalization of iGRAD. LDCs also need enhanced financing to reach the graduation threshold. On engagement with development partners, **the**

**Solomon Islands** stressed that a clear message about iGRAD needs to be communicated to development partners at home as well to ensure coordinated support at all levels.

## **Session V: Support by the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs in the implementation of the DPoA**

**Mr. Yeshey Dorji**, Special Assistant to the USG and High Representative and Senior Economic Affairs Officer of OHRLLS moderated the session. Mr. Dorji introduced the mandate and operation of the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs. He urged LDCs to reach out to the Technology Bank and demand for services. The Technology Bank is the sole UN entity that is dedicated to the LDCs on science, technology and innovation. It is of particular importance for graduating LDCs to request assistance. The Technology Bank provides continued assistance for five years beyond graduation from the LDC category.

**Mr. Taffere Tesfachew**, Managing Director of the UN Technology Bank for the LDCs, noted that the Technology Bank became operational by the end of 2018. Its primary mandate is to facilitate technology transfer to the LDCs to bridge the technological gap and address their primary development challenges. He noted that technological solutions can significantly aid the LDCs in overcoming developmental challenges. The primary focus is to identify suitable and pertinent technologies and facilitate their transfer to the country. It is of equal importance that the recipient countries can assimilate, utilize, learn from, and even enhance local technological capabilities. He highlighted the importance of needs assessment, capacity building, resource mobilization and partnership building including collaboration with UN and non-governmental agencies in the work of the Technology Bank.

The Technology Bank focuses on four key areas (i) Technologies aimed at enhancing agriculture and food systems; (ii) Technologies related to environmental conservation, climate change adaptation, and resilience building; (iii) Health-related technologies, particularly relevant in the present context; and (iv) Digital skills development and education. To date, it has completed technology needs assessments in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Gambia, Guinea, Timor Leste, Uganda, Cambodia, Kiribati, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. It was noted that needs assessments involve extensive surveys and consultations with various stakeholders. Hence, ownership of the process and active participation is crucial. He encouraged the LDCs to contact the Technology Bank if they need any support on technology needs.

Mr. Tesfachew commended tremendous support including financial and in-kind contributions from various countries, particularly Türkiye as the host country, and their commitment to the LDCs. He shared an innovative initiative of Türkiye to build knowledge and develop skills of young learners through exposure to diverse and frontier technologies.



**During the Q&A session, Sierra Leone** noted that the future lies in technology and education for Africa to make a leapfrog out of its current status. The country mentioned limited knowledge about the operations of the Technology Bank, and stressed the need to involve the NFPs in technology needs assessment at the country level. It suggested engaging the Director of Science and Technology within the Office of the President for such an exercise. **Malawi** appreciated the Technology Bank's work in providing access to research for LDCs and enquired about its work in Malawi. The country also echoed the need to involve the NFPs in such an exercise. **Lesotho** noted that the country managed to establish and prioritize agricultural mechanization, environment and biodiversity conservation, and education of women to bridge the digital divide between men and women through assistance from the UN Technology Bank. The country urged the LDCs to reach out to the Technology Bank and respond to the needs assessment and utilize all the assistance it extends to the LDCs. **Burkina Faso** mentioned that LDCs were not fully utilizing the Technology Bank and enquired about how to obtain assistance from the Technology Bank and participation in technology needs assessment. **Zambia** requested assistance for the development of a digital economy in collaboration with UNDP and in coordination with the Ministry of Finance to carry out an assessment and identify areas of intervention. **Haiti** and **Togo** enquired about criteria, conditions and procedures for the submission of evaluation applications. It was mentioned that there are no conditions for assessment, however the requests have to come from the relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Science or the Ministry of Technology. It was suggested that an inter-ministerial committee be established at the national level to facilitate the smooth conduct of the technology needs assessment. It was mentioned that the technology needs assessment in Zambia has stopped due to a lack of response from the country.

In answering the question about how long the assessment process would take raised by **Lao PDR**, Mr. Tesfachew commended Lao PDR for its efficient inter-ministerial coordination, and hoped to complete Lao PDR's needs assessment by the end of this year. **Cambodia** was another LDCs where technology needs assessment has progressed well thanks to the commitment of the government.

The Technology Bank hopes to finish the technology needs assessment in all LDCs by the end of this year, and start a new round in light of the evolving needs. An introduction about the Technology Makers Lab in LDCs was made. This youth specific initiative aims to bridge the technological divide of youth. It is also designed to generate youth employment through the transfer of knowledge, equipment, tools and expertise to LDCs. The pilot Technology Makers Lab has been launched in Niger thanks to the expertise of Türkiye. The Technology Makers Lab is expected to be set up in an additional 9 LDCs in the next three years.

## Closing

**H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS** emphasized that the DPoA promises to bring about transformative changes in the 46 LDCs, the lives and livelihoods of more than a billion people living there. She shared numerous events and processes in the coming two years where OHRLLS will actively engage to advocate for the LDCs, including but not limited to the UNGA78, the SDG Summit, COP28, LLDC3, and SIDS4 and the Summit of the Future. Ms. Fatima summarized discussions of the NFP meeting as follows:

- The first priority is to mainstream the DPoA targets and goals into national development strategies and to develop national implementation plans.
- There is a need to build the capacity of the national and sectoral focal points for effective integration, implementation, and monitoring of the DPoA.
- There is a need to enhance the support for the UN Technology Bank to leverage science, technology, and innovation for the LDCs to achieve the SDGs.
- LDCs need enhanced support from the UN system, including the RC, the UNCT, and the development partners to develop more effective tools for monitoring and evaluation for implementation of the DPoA, to tackle the challenges in data availability, access, collection, and validation, and to forge synergies with existing monitoring efforts on the SDGs.
- UNDESA and UNDP are collectively launching a practical guide on INFFs, which will support the LDCs in addressing the financing gaps for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the DPoA.
- OHRLLS plans to organize dedicated meetings on knowledge sharing and peer learning among the graduated countries and LDCs on the graduation pathway.
- OHRLLS is preparing a roadmap with a clear delineation of responsibilities for all relevant stakeholders to advance the targets, commitments, and deliverables of the DPoA.