

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

Report of the Secretary-General

**Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing
Countries for the Decade 2014 - 2024**

Introduction

The report is being prepared in response to the request by the General Assembly, in its resolution 76/217 to the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-seventh session a report on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024. The report will provide comprehensive information, analysis and statistical data on recent progress and challenges in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and of the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review. The report will also review the performance of the LLDCs on the Sustainable Development Goals and recent socio-economic development and the progress made in implementing the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA. Furthermore, it will highlight COVID-19 recovery efforts in LLDCs and identify areas that require further action and support. The report will provide important input to the intergovernmental processes including of the Second Committee of the General Assembly.

The report will be prepared based on information provided by entities in the United Nations system and other international organisations. The report will also be based on recent studies and analysis of current data and proceedings of recent meetings. The report will also provide a comprehensive statistical annex.

The Draft Outline of the report

I. Introduction

This section will briefly introduce the report, highlighting the legislative mandate for the report and its scope.

II. An overview of recent socio-economic development in LLDCs including impact of COVID-19 pandemic

The section will analyse recent developments in the social and economic situation of the LLDCs including progress made by LLDCs on the SDGs and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on these countries. The analysis will integrate gender and human rights.

III. Status of implementation of the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action

The section will assess the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA highlighting the major progress and challenges experienced including due to COVID-19. It will be prepared using inputs submitted by Member States, UN system organizations and other relevant international organizations and analysis of available relevant statistical data for each priority area. The specific sub sections will be namely-

- *Fundamental Transit Policy issues.*
- *Infrastructure Development and Maintenance*
- *International Trade and Trade Facilitation*

- *Regional Integration and cooperation*

- *Africa*

- The small, sparsely populated, fragmented and often isolated economies in LLDCs make a compelling case for these economies to integrate regionally, reap efficiencies and exploit economies of scale. African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have pursued the “linear model” of integration with a stepwise integration of goods, labor, and capital markets, as well as eventual monetary and fiscal integration. Aware of this, African countries make regional integration one of the central pieces of their policy actions and request support from the UN to ensure a stronger regional integration to speed SDGs implementation. In 2021, eight LLDCs (Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) received technical support from UNEP for a stronger regional integration in their Common Country Analyses (CCAs) for SDGs implementation. The CCA adequately analyse cross-border and regional challenges which have direct implications on country poverty situations.

- *Asia Pacific*

- At the 4th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific held in Suwon, Republic of Korea on 6-7 October 2021, countries in the Asia Pacific region agreed to step up actions and place nature at the core of solutions to stem the tide of pollution, protect seas and biodiversity, and transition to a carbon-neutral sustainable development path.
 - The third Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum held virtually on 8-10 September 2021, jointly organized by Ministry of Environment of Japan, and UNEP’s APCAP Secretariat, under the theme ‘Build back better for healthy air, healthy planet’, presented the 20 child-centred clean air solutions.
 - The commemorations of the 2nd International Day of Clean Air for blue skies for Asia and the Pacific was observed on 7th September 2021, under the framework of the UN Issue-Based Coalition on Climate Change Mitigation and Air Pollution (co-chaired by UNEP) in collaboration with the Republic of Korea Embassy in Thailand. UNEP Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen emphasized the need for promoting the green economy and green recovery for mitigating polluted air.
 - The first session of the 25th Intergovernmental Meeting of Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), supported through a UNEP Secretariat, was hosted by Viet Nam virtually on 8-9 September 2021. The meeting endorsed the workplan for implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and the COBSEA Regional Guidance on Harmonized National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes.

- *Structural economic transformation*

- *Africa*

- In 2021 structural economic transformation was integrated in the UN Cooperation Frameworks (CF) in eight LLDCs in Africa (Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The CFs in these countries support reframing of economic policies and practices around diversified economic transformation beyond traditional practices in production and consumption, that leaves no one behind, increases resilience to shocks, and protects the planet. With UNEP support, climate resilience is also integrated in the CFs of these countries; addressing legal, political and economic barriers to sustainable natural resources management and sustainable agriculture through protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.

- *Means of implementation*

Africa

UNEP supported the 7th Session of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-7) as a prerequisite to the high-level political forum (HLPF) 2021 and contributed to the high-level political forum itself. UNEP contributed to the background paper on SDG 12 for the ARFSD-7 which was convened virtually from 1 to 4 March 2021. The paper which was prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with contributions from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), focuses on Sustainable Development Goal 12 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”.

UNEP in partnership with UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), also hosted a virtual event at the ARFSD-7 to discuss a common approach to building back better through a greener pathway towards COVID-19 recovery. The side event titled, “Building Back Better: A Greener Pathway to COVID Recovery in Africa”, provided a platform to discuss what a common approach to building back better through a greener pathway to COVID-19 recovery should look like and offered an opportunity for countries to share lessons on policies and strategic approaches towards COVID-19 recovery in order to enhance the VPoA implementation.

UNEP in collaboration with DCO Africa supported the capacity building of national institutions and UN country teams in LLDCs on the integration of the environmental dimensions of SDGs (SDGs 6,7,12,13,15) in national development plans and UN Cooperation Frameworks to accelerate the implementation of SDGs. This was to assist countries to increase their potential to apply integrated approaches in various development areas and make progress in a big number of thematic areas concomitantly.

UNEP supported LLDCs to initiate strategic studies to inform policy actions and enhance their decision-making capacity. In Burkina Faso two (2) such studies were conducted.

i) UNEP supported an assessment study of the impact of COVID 19 on the country’s socio-economic situation. Funded by UNEP-UNDA Project 1819Q, “Towards Coherent Implementation of the Environmental Aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals”, the study shows a concrete case of the negative effects Covid-19 has had on the efforts of LLDCs to implement the SDGs. Concrete recommendations were formulated for a rapid socio-economic recovery of the country.

ii) The second study assessed country’s efforts to implement selected UNEA resolutions. The analysis revealed that the policy documents selected for this study integrate the SDG indicators and UNEA resolutions well and contribute through concrete actions to their implementation. Proposals in the form of recommendations were formulated both for improving the coherence of public policies with the environmental SDGs and the MEAs and for the synergy of actions to be carried out for real success in the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

IV. Follow-up and review and progress on Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years

The section will highlight progress in other activities of the United Nations system and other international organizations relating to implementation of the priorities of the VPoA including the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the VPoA.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

This section will provide key recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action based on the analysis provided in the report.

Statistical Annex

The statistical annex will provide, in a tabular form, referenced, national-level data on selected VPoA indicators discussed in the report.