

**DRAFT**  
**UNFPA input to the 2022 Report of the Secretary-General on the  
Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing  
Countries for the Decade 2014 - 2024**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is preparing the 2021 SG report on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 in response to the request by the General Assembly, in its resolution 75/228, to the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-sixth session.

In this regard, UNFPA is requested to provide input to the report in line with the draft outline proposed by OHRLLS. The report will:

- *provide comprehensive information and analysis on recent progress in the implementation of the VPoA and on actions requested in the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review and the performance of the LLDCs on the Sustainable Development Goals and recent socio-economic development*
- *also highlight COVID-19 recovery efforts in LLDCs and identify areas that require further action and support.*

**Section I: Introduction**

*The section will briefly introduce the report, highlighting the legislative mandate for the report and its scope. - FOR OHRLLS DRAFTING*

**Section II: An overview of recent socio-economic development in landlocked developing countries including impact of COVID-19 pandemic and building back better**

- *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.*

**UNFPA updated inputs focused on:**

- *Using recent data, the section analyses recent developments in the social and economic situation of the LLDCs including progress made by LLDCs on the SDGs.*
- *It will highlight the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and recovery efforts and suggest policy recommendations to enhance the implementation of the VPoA and achievement of the SDGs by the LLDCs and refer to initiatives within the context of the UNFPA Strategic Plan.*
- *The report will also provide an analysis of the impact on human rights, gender equality and youth (demographic dividend) and identify recommendations, including support provided related to the use of population data.*

## UNFPA PROPOSALS TO SECTION II:

The international community must rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and get the world back on track to its common objectives adopted in the 2030 Agenda. The socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have halted or reversed progress in many countries, including landlocked developing countries.

In support of recovery from the pandemic, [the United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19](#) and the [Global Humanitarian Response Plan to COVID-19](#) were launched in 2020. UNFPA co-authored the health pillar of the UN framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in collaboration with WHO and provided contributions to the other pillars of social protection and basic services, economic recovery, and multilateral collaboration. UNFPA also developed the [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: UNFPA Global Response Plan](#), which focuses on three strategic priorities: (a) continuity of sexual and reproductive health services, including the protection of the health workforce; (b) addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices; (c) ensuring the supply of contraceptives and reproductive health commodities. UNFPA reprogrammed 30 percent of 2020 work plan interventions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to programmatic interventions at the national level and the development of the [COVID-19 Population Vulnerability Dashboard](#) in 2020, UNFPA subsequently launched the [Population Data Portal \(PDP\)](#) in April 2022. The PDP is the ultimate data source and tracker for population and development data with the aim of highlighting inequalities where they exist.

UNFPA also supports LLDCs which are LDCs to implement the recently adopted development framework for least developed countries, the [Doha Programme of Action \(DPoA\) for Least Developed Countries, for the period 2022-2031](#). In this regard, UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 outlines a focus on programmes in these countries with a total of 54 countries including 39 least developed countries and 15 landlocked developing countries, accounting for 60% of total core resources. UNFPA will support the implementation of the framework related to strengthening the use of population data for development and emergencies; mainstreaming gender equality into actions and targets on issues including access to financing, education, youth, migration, good governance; actions to harness the demographic dividend to support sustainable development in LDCs. UNFPA will also support implementation of the DPoA as it relates to SDG 5.6 on universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and commitments to the eliminate of all forms of violence against women (VAW) including GBV and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and continued investment in gender-responsive prevention and risk reduction, including through the adoption of legislation, policies related to climate change.

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

This section assesses the progress made in the implementation of the VPoA highlighting the major progress and challenges experienced. It will be prepared through an analysis of available relevant statistical data for each priority area.

The specific priorities include -

1. Fundamental Transit Policy issues.
2. Infrastructure Development and Maintenance
3. International Trade and Trade Facilitation
4. Regional Integration and cooperation
5. Structural economic transformation
6. Means of implementation

***UNFPA updated inputs focused on:*** Priority areas 4, 5 and 6 above and refer to initiatives within the context of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025, where necessary.

### **UNFPA PROPOSALS TO SECTION III:**

Landlocked developing countries face varied development challenges and UNFPA continues to support national efforts as they relate to the following priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action:

- Priority 4 *Regional integration & cooperation*, paragraphs 54 to 58, through South-South Cooperation
- Priority 5 *Structural economic transformation*, paragraphs 59 and 62, through strengthening health systems to provide quality sexual and reproductive health services and promoting innovative solutions towards universal access to sexual and reproductive health, data for development, policy advocacy and normative guidance
- Priority 6 *Means of Implementation*, paragraph 68, through official development assistance flows for universal access to sexual and reproductive health; and supporting landlocked developing countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 5, 10, 16, and 17; and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation as a strategy to achieve the above goals.

#### *Regional integration and cooperation*

Global mandates on South-South and Triangular Cooperation include the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (BAPA) and BAPA+40 (2019), the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the UN General Assembly. These agreements underscore the importance of SSTC and partnerships as critical mechanisms to support state actors to realise all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

UNFPA promotes regional integration and cooperation to advance learning and knowledge transfer through robust South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in line with its corporate strategy, thus enabling the LLDCs and LLDCs which are also least developed countries (LDCs) to benefit from the experiences and lessons learned from one another in the areas of strengthening health systems, investing in population data, harnessing the demographic dividend, gender equality and addressing humanitarian interventions and human mobility issues.

#### *Structural economic transformation*

Vulnerable populations such as older persons, people with underlying health conditions and disabilities, indigenous populations, women and girls, including pregnant women, internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants, continue to be among the most disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, thus further cementing the need to invest in strengthening health systems and social protection systems.

#### **Country Examples:**

- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNFPA's engagement focused on mobilising domestic financing to meet the family planning needs of women with the aim of supporting the government to transition from reliance on donor funding to domestic resources. As a result, the Ministry of Health allocated funds to purchase contraceptives, with gradual annual increases. The increased allocation which began in 2018 and the collaboration between UNFPA and the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund has resulted in a marked increase in the number of women who benefited from accessing discounted contraceptives through the State Guaranteed Benefit Package, with 107 prescriptions in 2016 to

20,000 in 2021. UNFPA also supported the strengthened capacity of Members of Parliament, the Ministry of Health, healthcare institutions and civil society organisations on program budgeting and medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF). Further, the Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) on Family planning (FP) for the period 2021-2024 was endorsed, consisting of a road map of the MoH on how to achieve the FP targets especially for women in vulnerable situations. In order to maintain awareness regarding the need for reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that women's basic health needs are met, key messages and health education materials on information about COVID-19 risks for women and female health workers were disseminated.

- UNFPA also contributed to **Kazakhstan's** United Nations Country Team's (UNCT) Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) of the COVID-19 impact on the population and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and older persons. The SEIA provided recommendations to the Government of Kazakhstan for effective systemic measures on recovery and development. Moreover, UNFPA supported a number of specialised sociological studies in Kazakhstan in 2019 and 2020 among people with disabilities with regard to SRH issues and GBV protective measures. The findings of such studies were used to inform the UNCT submission to the Committee on the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) between 2019 and 2020. The submissions highlighted support provided to Kazakhstan on the implementation of the frameworks at the national level.

### *Means of Implementation*

Without question, effective use of data saves lives. The COVID-19 pandemic and the response has demonstrated that the lack of data, including population data, continues to hinder actions by state and non-state actors alike. UNFPA has made critical contributions to global, regional (such as the [Africa United Nations Knowledge Hub for COVID-19](#)), and national initiatives geared towards strengthening statistical systems to collect and analyse demographic data. UNFPA has supported the World Population and Housing Census (WPHC) Programme in the context of respective country programmes and as part of the United Nations Country Teams, through the 2020 round of the census.

UNFPA recently launched the [Population Data Portal \(PDP\)](#) at the 55th session of the Commission of Population and Development (CPD55). The PDP provides a home for UNFPA's core population, health, and gender indicators, and is designed to capitalise on the increasing availability of geo-referenced census and survey data, and provide a wide range of layering and mapping functions for users. Mapping population and development data is critical to locating those left behind, to tracking SDGs at sub-national level, and helping governments know where to invest for greatest impact.

UNFPA supports LLDCs in their census preparations as a response to the delays and postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of countries remain committed to conducting respective censuses in 2022-2023 with support from UNFPA.

### **Country/Regional Examples:**

- In **Bolivia**, UNFPA provided technical support to the National Statistics Institute (INE) in the pre-census phase of the National Population and Housing Census 2022 in partnership with UNFPA's regional office in Panama and Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE). Through this partnership, UNFPA and ECLAC continue to provide timely feedback on the design of various instruments and the operational plan for the Census, and facilitate lessons learned and good practices from other Latin American countries.

- UNFPA continued to co-chair the Regional Collaborative Platform Working Group on SDG Data and Statistics, which focused on the harmonisation and alignment of SDG data and statistics and has provided technical support to National Statistics Offices including in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on statistical operations in LLDCs in the **Asia Pacific region**. The crux of support from UNFPA is strengthening population (demographic) data systems in LLDCs which are also LDCs, through actions to strengthen civil registration and vital statistics and to develop disaggregated data in **African LLDCs** such as Burkina Faso, Burundi, and South Sudan.
- As LLDCs continue to respond to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA continued to provide support for the rollout of the Population and Housing Census 2020 in **Nepal** (2021), **Turkmenistan** (2022) and **Uzbekistan** (2023).
- In **Moldova**, UNFPA continued to contribute to improving national statistical data, population policies, and the new national development strategy “Moldova 2030.” In the context of conflict-affected areas and the challenges associated with data gathering in remote remote and hard-to-reach and insecure area sensing technology, UNFPA continued its partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Flowminder to utilise statistical methods and existing surveys, satellite and mobile data to generate large-scale population estimates.

#### **IV. Follow-up and review**

The section will highlight progress in the activities of the United Nations system and other international organizations relating to implementation of the priorities of the VPoA including on the key activities of the Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years.

***UNFPA updated inputs focused on:*** actions taken to promote the integration, synergy and coherence in the implementation and monitoring of, and follow-up to, the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda at the national, regional and international levels. Please include relevant linkages to concrete initiatives related to the accelerated implementation of regional outcomes on the International Conference on Population and Development, where possible.

#### **UNFPA PROPOSALS TO SECTION IV:**

UNFPA will continue to support the implementation of the United Nations [Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs in the Remaining Five Years](#) in LLDCs based on their national priorities with respect to the need to improve on key areas of development, including strengthening health systems, investing in population data, harnessing the demographic dividend, gender equality and addressing humanitarian interventions and issues concerning human mobility. Support in these areas is aligned with the political declaration of the Mid-Term Review of the Vienna Programme of Action.

#### *Harnessing the Demographic Dividend*

Harnessing the demographic dividend will support countries in their efforts to reach the objective of the VPoA. The [United Nations Youth Strategy](#) is a framework which guides the UN system as it steps up its work with and for young people across three pillars – peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development – in all contexts. [UNFPA’s global strategy for youth and adolescents](#), “My Body, My Life, My World” is aligned with the UN Youth Strategy. The former addresses the need for access to quality health care services, education and investments in enabling environments for young people to realise their full potential. This approach concretely supports LLDCs with the implementation actions geared towards harnessing the demographic dividend as outlined in the political declaration on the Mid-Term Review of the Vienna Programme of Action.

### Country Examples:

- In **Bolivia**, the municipal governments of El Alto and Tupiza in the departments of La Paz and Potosí, respectively, were supported by UNFPA in order to conduct webinars and facebook live sessions. The sessions were tailored for adolescents and young people, on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, particularly in the context of the pandemic. Further, through the use of virtual platforms, a process of training youth leaders for peacebuilding was also implemented, in collaboration with the municipal government of El Alto and the Public University of el Alto as a component to the recovery stage of social and political conflicts. Additionally, in the midst of lockdowns geared towards addressing the impact of COVID-19, there was an uptick in the number of reported instances of adolescents with mental health problems. UNFPA contributed to initiatives to incorporate online strategies such as telephone hotlines and the use of messaging applications such as WhatsApp and training of staff who attend to the needs of young people.
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, UNFPA supported the development of a Youth wellbeing and development index within the UN and Ministry of Culture, Information, Sport and Youth Policy Action Plan. The results of national study on civic participation, economic opportunities, education, science and culture, health, information and communication technologies, safety and security and family development bring great evidence for future planning.
- UNFPA continued to support a number of relevant initiatives in In the **Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR)** (integration of actions to harness the demographic dividend into the Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan); **Afghanistan** (advocacy campaigns with youth-led organisations); and in **Turkmenistan**, (UNFPA leads the UN joint efforts on Youth Policy with respect to the implementation and monitoring of the State Programme on Youth Policy and its Action Plan).

### *Strengthening health systems*

The provision of support for LLDCs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and well-being and the respective targets) and 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and the respective targets) through efforts to accelerate investments in integrated health systems remain critical, as demonstrated by lengthy disruptions to supply chains and service delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Country Examples:

- In **Afghanistan**, UNFPA supported the government to enhance access to sexual and reproductive health services to increase the number of Family Health Houses which provide maternal health services.
- In **Kazakhstan**, UNFPA supported the Government in establishing a legal landscape on access to improving youth friendly health services and developed several clinical protocols on reproductive health services and algorithms for psycho-social support.

### *Gender-Based Violence (GBV)*

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting pressure on public health systems, triggering unprecedented measures by governments including movement restrictions and shelter-in-place orders. Women are disproportionately represented in the health and social services sectors, increasing their risk of exposure to the disease. Stress, limited mobility, and livelihood disruptions also increase the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence and exploitation. UNFPA plays a global leadership role in provision of gender-based violence services and coordination of multi-sectoral response services. UNFPA's interventions also support the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative which is a gender-responsive effort to stem the spread of the virus, while working to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

The Spotlight Initiative delivers much needed services which are in line with World Health Organisation and United Nations guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Country/Regional Examples:**

- In **Asia and the Pacific region**, UNFPA, in collaboration with UN Women and WHO, have jointly developed "Data Collection on Violence against Women and COVID-19: Decision Tree" to guide actors to decide when and how to best collect data on women's experiences of violence and their access and use of relevant services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In **Kazakhstan**, UNFPA supported the Government to improve the health system response to GBV survivors through the development of a package of clinical protocols and technical manuals for nurses, psychologists and social workers in order to provide care for GBV survivors at the primary healthcare level. Also UNFPA supported the development of distance-based training courses for primary healthcare providers on providing basic care for GBV survivors. In the context of a regional initiative in Central Asia to address GBV, UNFPA also supported the government to improve the mechanisms of a multi-sectoral response to gender-based violence with a special focus on the needs of people with disabilities who are subjected to GBV in Kazakhstan. Information on reproductive health and gender-based violence was adapted into different disability-friendly formats (sign language, video-audio, Braille and Easy-to-read formats).
- In **Turkmenistan**, the Central Asian initiative on GBV, was rolled out by engaging health professionals, police and social sector actors to ensure the access to and scaling up of the referral pathways to vulnerable girls and women. UNFPA also supported the Government in the implementation and monitoring of the second National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2021-2025, which builds on the 2018 Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on CEDAW, other international human rights obligations relating to gender equality, the assessment results of the first Action Plan for 2016-2020, and relevant SDG goals and targets linked to gender equality committed to by the government. UNFPA continued to advocate for improving national legislation to prevent domestic violence in line with the international norms and standards.
- UNFPA's interventions included data generation and analysis to monitor the health system response to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence in **Nepal**; provision of support to the governments of **Mongolia** and **Lao PDR** to address legal frameworks related to reducing domestic violence, GBV, and improving gender equality.
- In **North Macedonia**, UNFPA continued to support the government to address the needs of women and girls in the development of two key policy documents the law on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, which was aligned with the Istanbul Convention and the National Health 2030 Strategy and engage in joint programming initiatives with agencies including UNICEF, WHO, UNDP; civil society organisations include the Red Cross and Y-PEER; development partners namely the the European Union and the United Kingdom. UNFPA also designed and deployed life-saving mobile sexual and reproductive helath services, innovative and fully integrated into the national health system, for those left behind in underserved areas, severely affected by COVID19 pandemic.

### **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.

***UNFPA updated inputs focused on** recommendations based on challenges experienced related to the implementation of the initiatives highlighted in Sections 3 and 4*

## UNFPA PROPOSALS TO SECTION V:

- The United Nations system should continue to provide support based on the development priorities of LLDCs, particularly within the context of the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, regional and global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda and the “Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs” in the Remaining Five Years. The implementation of the roadmap should account for enhancing capacity and building resilience in the national health, economic, social, harnessing the demographic dividend and governance systems through data collection and analysis on the overall COVID-19 case management and socio-economic situations.
- In responses to COVID-19 and other crises, government policymakers, non-governmental partners, the private sector, academia, UN system funds and programmes and specialised agencies, and other development partners should account for the lessons learned from innovations employed and challenges experienced during the pandemic, and respective responses and recovery efforts. Interventions should also account to the implementation of relevant development frameworks such as the SDGs and the DPoA for LDCs to address:
  - **Strengthening national statistical systems**, including the use of population data to effectively utilise evidence-based approaches to planning for development, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian interventions
  - **Strengthening and integrating health systems**, to ensure that supply chains and provision of services are not disrupted
  - **Building resilience of education systems** to ensure that learning opportunities are not disrupted in formal and informal education settings
  - **Strengthening employment and social protection systems** that are also gender-responsive, in order to ensure persons who are employed in informal and formal economies, particularly women, young people and people with disabilities are not overlooked in recovery efforts
  - **Providing technical support to ensure that GBV prevention and clinical management care** and GBV referral systems are functioning according to national guidelines that address the needs of persons at high risk of experiencing violence
  - **Ensuring that COVID-19 response plans are sensitive to adolescent and youth-specific health-care needs, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and psychosocial support;** and
  - **Strengthening existing networks at the national and sub-national levels** in order to cultivate compassion, raise awareness of and protection from the virus, promote healthy behaviour and social norm change, reduce stigma and discrimination while supporting the building of safer more resilient communities.