



**United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS)**

**Opening Statement
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and
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**At the
Virtual Workshop for Central, Northern and Western Africa Subregions**

**Strengthening the nexus approach in Africa for an accelerated implementation of the
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063**

**10 June 2021
Opening Segment (08:00-08:20)**

Distinguished experts,
Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you at the opening of this workshop.

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation to OSAA for partnering with OHRLLS in formulating and delivering on this important and timely workshop. I would also like to recognise the generous support of the People's Republic of China for funding this important project.

I would like also to sincerely recognize the deepening collaboration between our offices, which is providing us with a much stronger position to effectively respond to Africa's development needs and priorities. For example, my Office, OHRLLS was pleased to facilitate the national level surveys by linking the consultants with the National Focal Points in the countries where the case studies were conducted.

Distinguished experts,
Colleagues,

It is broadly recognized that there cannot be sustainable development without peace and peace without sustainable development. Similarly, the relationship between peace and justice, including through realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, is crucial for achieving sustainable development in vulnerable countries such as the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).

Of the 91 countries that make up the groups of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, almost 40 are in Africa. In relation to this subregional workshop for Central, Northern and Western Africa, more than half of the countries belong to at least one of the vulnerable groups represented by my Office.

These vulnerable countries face unique developmental challenges. LDCs face structural constraints that inhibit their ability to attain sustainable development. LLDCs are characterized by lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets. SIDS are also far away from world markets and face an existential threat because of climate change.

Therefore, violent conflict adds an extra layer of challenge to countries already facing other vulnerabilities. Conflict-affected and post-conflict vulnerable countries have unique challenges in achieving durable peace and sustainable development including, the difficulty of attracting investors and building productive capacity. It is therefore not surprising that they grow more slowly than their stable counterparts. Consequently, reaching a sustained GDP growth of at least 7 percent, in the case of LDCs, will require affected countries to secure sustained peace.

As you are aware, the Fifth United Nations Conference on the least developed countries, also called LDC5, will be held in January 2022 in Doha. In preparation for this conference, the Africa Regional Review Meeting was held in February 2021. The Ministers and representatives of the African LDCs and Haiti participating in the meeting agreed that, a successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of African LDCs and Haiti will contribute to peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all.

I will mention a few relevant action areas that were agreed upon at the regional review meeting:

First, there is need for enhanced capacity for conflict mediation, resolution and management and post-conflict consolidation.

Second, special support should be provided to post-conflict countries to enable them to achieve a smooth transition from relief to development.

Third, the international community should support the implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa in order to create enabling conditions for social and economic cohesion and resilience.

These action areas, among others, will be important to building back better in the post-COVID-19 era, achieving sustainable development and, implementing all the relevant internationally agreed development programmes. Among them, Agenda 2063, the Vienna Programme of Action and the next Programme of Action for the LDCs.

I am pleased that OSAA in collaboration with ECA and my Office, OHRLLS, is implementing this project that aims to contribute to raising awareness of and strengthening capacities of African countries to formulate and implement policies that reinforce the interlinkages between development, peace, security, humanitarian and human rights.

The study on the nexus between peace, humanitarian work, development and human rights, as well as the manual that was prepared will serve as great content for our discussion during this meeting.

With these few reflections and remarks, which we are certain the workshop will carry further, let me wish you productive deliberations.

I thank you.