



**The Board of Advisors on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries  
and Small Island Developing States**

**Third Meeting**

3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday, 18 March 2024  
Room S-2724, UN Headquarters, New York

**“Sustainability Week”**

**Concept Note**

As we passed the critical milestone of the mid-point in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, impactful transformation must remain a priority of the ongoing efforts to advance all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental – in order to achieve peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability for all. Among others, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and humanitarian crises in various parts of the world have together posed severe challenges to these efforts and derailed progress towards implementation of the SDGs by 2030. Building on the momentum gained from the September 2023 SDG Summit is important in effectively tackling the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Now, as we set our sights on the Summit of the Future in September 2024, sustainability is more than ever key goal for critical sectors of the economy to meaningfully contribute to a prosperous future for present and future generations. Sustainable transportation, infrastructure and energy are avenues by which to attain such a future. The foundation of the future of commerce must be marked by environmental responsibility. We must promote sustainable production and consumption in every facet of human existence. Economic prosperity is intertwined with sustainability. Sustainable business models must, therefore, be promoted in all economic activities.

Sustainability also means ensuring that the benefits of progress are shared equitably, leaving no one behind. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) grapple with specific geographical constraints and resource limitations that require tailored solutions.

The cascading crises in recent years have contributed to unprecedented levels of global public debt, with the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS disproportionately affected. With a total of \$US 704 billion in public debt, the debt burden continues to constrain these countries’ ability to mobilise the resources needed to invest in sustainable development.

Many economic activities have been severely impacted, including tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of the tourist ecosystem, especially for SIDS, where

tourism accounts for nearly 35-80% of all exports. Advancing a concerted approach towards strengthening tourism resilience is therefore imperative.

Similarly, the annual cost of infrastructure damages in SIDS can reach almost 10% of their entire GDP. LDCs also face greater challenges related to infrastructure connectivity. The infrastructure financing gap in vulnerable developing countries including the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS is estimated to be over \$1 trillion annually. Developing a risk-informed approach to infrastructure development and management is therefore vital.

Likewise, sustainable transport is essential for addressing the special needs of vulnerable countries; and achieving just, inclusive and equitable energy transitions is a prerequisite for ensuring that no one will be left behind. Establishing and promoting efficient transport systems particularly in LLDCs and SIDS is critical. While investment is needed across the board, LDCs and LLDCs require a specific focus on transit transport connectivity and energy infrastructure whereas SIDS have an urgent need for climate-resilient infrastructure projects.

As of 2023, 473 million people in LDCs are without any connection to electricity, accounting for almost two-thirds of the global population lacking access, and 75% of the population lacking reliable access. To reach universal access, urgent actions are needed to scale up support to LDCs, prioritising the poorest and rural communities. On average, 60% of the population in LLDCs have access to electricity as of 2021. Almost half of the 32 LLDCs have achieved 97% of the population living with access; with the low average coverage reflecting the low access rates of LLDCs that are also LDCs. Similarly, SIDS have access rates above 95% as of 2021, with the lowest access rates also reflecting the low rates of SIDS that are also LDCs.

Therefore, to identify concrete actions and solutions for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, that can feed into the Fourth Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Third Conference on Landlocked Developing States and the Summit of the Future scheduled in 2024, as well as the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development in 2025, the President of the General Assembly will convene the inaugural “Sustainability Week” from 15 to 19 April 2024.

In line with General Assembly resolution 77/335, highlighting the importance of rationalising GA thematic debates to ensure high-level attendance, the Week will feature:

- High-level thematic debate on debt sustainability and socio-economic equality for all
- High-level thematic event on tourism
- High-level meeting on sustainable transport
- Informal dialogue on building global resilience and promoting sustainable development through infrastructure connectivity
- Global stocktaking marking the completion of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All to further accelerate the implementation of SDG 7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this regard, the third meeting of the PGA’s Advisory Board on LLS will be an opportunity to share insights on key messages and recommendations related to the upcoming Sustainability Week, guided by the questions provided below.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How can the high-level events of the Sustainability week contribute best to the upcoming conferences SIDS4 and LLDC3?
2. How can we leverage political support for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS during the events to be convened in Sustainability Week?
3. How can the deliberations at the Sustainability Week shine the spotlight on the specific issues faced by countries in special situation?