



UN-OHRLLS

Concept Note

Workshop on

“crises mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries”

**Conference Room #5
United Nation Headquarters, New York
Thursday 27 April 2017**

Background

The 48 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) represent the poorest and most vulnerable segment of the international community. Extreme poverty, structural weaknesses of economies, poor infrastructure, acute susceptibility to external shocks, high magnitude of natural and man-made disasters and communicable diseases constitute a set of enduring challenges for LDCs. Overcoming these challenges is a prerequisite for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recent natural shocks and environmental catastrophes that severely affected LDCs include the Asian tsunami (2004); cyclones in Myanmar (2008), Tuvalu (2015) and Haiti (2016); earthquakes in Haiti (2010) and Nepal (2015); blizzard in Afghanistan (2008); and droughts in sub-Saharan Africa (2016) and in numerous other LDCs. The adverse effects of these shocks are further compounded by economic crises of 2008-09. Outbreaks of health epidemics such as the Ebola crises in West Africa (2014-2015) gravely affected Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, all of which are LDCs.

Evidence shows that climate change disproportionately affects least developed countries. From 2010 to mid-2013, people living in these countries were five times more likely to die from climate-related disasters than people living elsewhere. Rapid urbanization and population growth also mean that both human and economic losses from disasters are on the rise. Furthermore, the high incidence of poverty and limited social protection system exacerbate vulnerability to climate change and related disasters.

LDCs are not only exposed to extreme shocks, they are also exceptionally vulnerable to these shocks, given their weak economy and little resilience to cope with them.

There is now a growing international consensus that the specters of multiple crises are badly assailing the development prospects of LDCs. There are mounting calls to build the ability of LDCs to resist, recover from, or adapt to the effects of shocks and maintain or transform living standards in the face of shocks or stresses without compromising their long-term development prospects. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) recognizes the fact that the past successes of LDCs and their future prospects are threatened by a host of economic and environmental risks and underscores the need to ensure resilience in the face of such external shocks.

The Paris Agreement establishes the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change with a view to contributing to sustainable development. The Sendai Framework emphasizes the importance of risk-informed and resilient development as a pathway for achieving poverty reduction. It also envisages global cooperation, a participatory implementation mechanism with accountability, and international financial assistance and technology transfer to poorer countries.

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the Least Developed Countries underscored a set of priority areas for action, which include building resilience of LDCs to withstand economic shocks and to mitigate their adverse effects; strengthening LDCs' ability to

withstand and overcome the adverse effects of climate change, enhance sustainable growth and protect biodiversity; and building the resilience of LDCs to withstand natural hazards. Hence, designing appropriate policies for crisis mitigation and resilience is critical to achieving sustainable development in LDCs.

The Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the IPoA resolves to fulfil the commitments to further implement the Istanbul Programme of Action and underscores the urgency of finding additional solutions to the major challenges facing the least developed countries in a concerted manner. It recognizes that the way forward for crisis mitigation and resilience-building requires that coordinated, balanced and integrated actions be taken at all levels, including through the strengthening of existing initiatives, with the aim of building the resilience of the least developed countries in overcoming their vulnerabilities.

Last year, the General Assembly in its resolution 71/238 requested the Secretary-General to undertake an in-depth analysis on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries, at the national and international levels, with a view to building and further strengthening crisis mitigation and resilience in the least developed countries and to submit it to the Assembly at its seventy-second session. The same resolution also sets the parameters of the analysis as follows:

- (a) Stocktaking of various shocks, including natural disasters, economic crises and health epidemics and their impacts on the sustainable development of the least developed countries;
- (b) Reviewing the current national, regional and international landscapes to better equip the least developed countries against shocks and their effectiveness and identifying gaps;
- (c) Cataloguing and evaluating various risk-management mechanisms at the subnational, national, regional and global levels available to the least developed countries that combine ex ante preparations for risk with the ex post facto ability to cope with such risk and making recommendations for further actions to strengthen the resilience of the least developed countries;
- (d) Elaborating on how the international community, including developed and developing countries, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, are supporting and can deepen support for resilience-building for the least developed countries;
- (e) Examining how the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders, as well as local knowledge and community involvement, can contribute to resilience-building for the least developed countries through preparedness measures, the creation of employment, awareness-raising, the provision of insurance and other measures;

Objectives of the meeting

With the aim of undertaking an in-depth study, the UN-OHRLLS is organizing a one day workshop to identify appropriate policies and measures at the national, regional and international levels to support crisis mitigation and resilience building in LDCs, taking into account their specific constraints, especially with respect to resources and capacities.

Proposals and recommendations of the study should be based on the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current mechanisms, including LDCs' accessibility to them, and take into account lessons learned and best practices. The study will build on current research on the factors that contribute to the extreme vulnerability of LDCs. The discussions should identify what is required from LDCs and their development partners and identify a specific architecture, which could speed up LDCs resilience against shocks and crises.

The deliberations at the meeting should build on available reports, analysis, think pieces, research papers and statistics. The meeting would also examine various risk mitigation and resilience building mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels; macroeconomic policies and social protection mechanisms to reduce individual vulnerability; insurance and reinsurance products and bonds; and national and intergovernmental arrangements for rapid response at the onset of the crises. It will also examine options for leveraging existing arrangements, such as SDRs and guarantees, to provide a liquidity cushion for LDCs in case of any internal and external crises and shocks. The role of multi stakeholder partnerships would also feature prominently in the discussions.

Participation and logistical issues

Participants will include experts in relevant fields of the study, including selected representatives from key UN departments, offices and agencies and other international organizations. The number of participants should not exceed 20 to allow for interactive discussions. Participation is by personal invitation only.

Format and expected output

UN-OHRLLS will prepare issues notes and background documents on the different agenda items. These documents will be circulated to participants before the meeting, to allow for their comments. For each session there will be one or two short presentations by invited experts on the main issues to kick off discussions, for which sufficient time will be allocated. The meeting will be held only in English.

The outcome of the meeting should include a detailed outline and framework of the study with some specific recommendations on the modalities of the crisis mitigation and resilience building for LDCs.