Investing in broadband can lead to among others: employment creation in sectors that are likely to be ICT-using such as finance, education and healthcare; increased innovation and productivity; and, better governance. Therefore, investing in broadband would contribute towards meeting some of the IPoA priorities (e.g. IPoA, paragraph 47.1.c) and SDG 9.c. that calls for significantly increasing access to information and communications technology and providing universal and affordable access to the Internet in LDCs by 2020.

For targets such as that of halving poverty, which was achieved globally, progress in LDCs was slow. Most LDCs also did not meet the IPoA targets of human and social development, which were closely related to the MDGs, despite acceleration of efforts over the past 5 years.

Ultimately, many of the IPoA targets are not on track after half of its implementation period has passed. There is need to step-up implementation as well as strengthen the monitoring process, if the IPoA objectives are to be achieved by 2020.

Accelerating implementation of the IPoA within the context of the 2030 Agenda

The global community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. While the new global development agenda has a special focus on LDCs and other vulnerable countries, it does not completely incorporate the goals, targets and actions agreed upon in the IPoA (see the State of Least Developed Countries 2016 Report). Some of the specific IPoA areas that were not fully incorporated in the 2030 Agenda include the following: broadening of LDCs’ economic base, with the intention of reducing commodity dependence; diversifying export products and markets to non-traditional destinations; building and expanding broadband connectivity,
e-networking and e-connectivity in relevant areas. In some instances, there are variations on the deadlines for meeting some targets. For example, the IPoA has an earlier deadline (2020) for meeting the target of providing universal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation to all, while the SDG target is for 2030.

In general, the mapping exercise conducted in the State of the LDCs 2016 report determined that implementing the IPoA priorities will significantly contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, in order to overcome the structural challenges faced in LDCs, building coherence and synergy in the implementation and follow-up of the IPoA in the context of the 2030 Agenda will be crucial. This may entail the following: mapping interrelations between the IPoA priority areas and the SDGs; ensuring that they are integrated in sectoral and national plans; allocating/increasing resource allocations to meet the objectives and; ensuring efficient follow-up and monitoring.

Objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting

The rationale of the regional meeting is twofold:

- First, share country-experiences on how LDCs are integrating the global development agendas into their national strategic planning processes. Among others, countries will highlight success examples and challenges faced while integrating and implementing the various global agendas. Countries will also discuss on-going strategies for accelerating implementation of the IPoA.

- Second, participants will discuss how LDCs can leverage investment in broadband to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. The discussion will be informed by initial findings of case studies on broadband conducted in two Asia-Pacific LDCs (Cambodia and Vanuatu).

The outcomes of this segment of the meeting will contribute to among others, the broadband commission’s working group on vulnerable countries. This working group is convened by UN-OHRLLS, under the auspices of the Broadband Commission Secretariat. Furthermore, the broadband discussions will contribute to the financing for development follow-up, specifically the annual discussions on infrastructure.

Participation

The meeting will draw participation from the following:

- All Asia-Pacific LDCs and Pacific SIDS are invited, with funding made available for two representatives from the capital
- Development partners
- Representatives of the United Nations and other relevant international organizations
- The private sector
- Other Asia-Pacific countries

Format of the meeting, venue and dates

The style of the meeting will be informal discussions and reflection. The expectation is that participants will engage in an informal interactive discussion. The meeting will be conducted in English and French.

The regional meeting will be held over two days in Vanuatu from 26 to 27 October 2017.

1. The IPoA has eight priorities broken down in a number of goals, targets and actions