Partnerships for Accelerated Sustainable Energy Development and Enhanced Resilience
Building to climate change in LLDCs

2019 HLPF side event

Concept Note

1.15-2.30 p.m., 12 July 2019

Conference Room F, UNHQ

Background
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the critical importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for the achievement of the SDGs in all countries. It is important to harness the potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships to support the development of LLDCs to ensure accelerated progress towards the SDGs. This side-event will focus on how to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote implementation of SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy.

Energy access is essential for private sector development, productive capacity building and expansion of trade and it also has strong linkages to climate action, health, education, water and food security and women’s empowerment. Access to sustainable and affordable energy for all (SDG 7) is therefore a key enabler for the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also a key enabler for the achievement of SDG 13 aimed at combatting climate change and building resilience.

Despite the importance of access to energy, the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) with a total population of about 503 million still face daunting challenges in achieving universal access to energy, energy efficiency and in scaling up renewable energy production and use. Access to electricity in LLDCs increased from 49.5% in 2014 to 56.3% in 2017, however LLDCs still lag behind the world average of 88.8%. The Euro-Asian and Latin American LLDCs have been able to achieve access rates of more than 90%, whilst the African LLDCs have an average access rate of 32%. Although LLDCs experienced an increase in electricity in rural areas between 2014 and 2017, the rural urban gap is still significant. Access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking in LLDCs increased marginally from 28.1% in 2015 to 28.8% in 2017 showing that at least two-thirds of the population relies on biomass for cooking, underscoring the urgent need for improved access to clean and modern cooking energy.
The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for the LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 prioritizes infrastructure development and energy among its six priorities. The VPoA stresses that energy infrastructure and access to affordable, reliable and renewable energy and related technologies are critically important for modernizing information and communications technology and transit systems, reducing delays and enhancing productive capacity to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. This helps in addressing the development challenges that they face associated with their geographical disadvantage of lacking direct territorial access to the sea and remoteness and isolation from world markets.

Climate change is having negative impacts on the LLDCs. Although climate change is not a specific priority area in the VPoA, it affects most of the priority areas of the programme, including infrastructure development and maintenance and structural economic transformation. The LLDCs have high vulnerability to the impact of climate change because they are mostly located in dryland regions; some of the LLDCs have a large proportion of their land under mountainous terrain and are impacted by melting of glaciers; and they are too dependent on climate-sensitive resources such as agriculture, livestock, forestry, water, and fisheries. LLDCs are experiencing increased frequencies of natural disasters, water scarcity, extreme weather events, persistent droughts, increased desertification, and flooding including glacial outbursts. The proportion of land area covered by freshwater bodies in LLDCs has declined by 4.7% over the last decade.

Climate change is also affecting infrastructure including transport, ICT and energy infrastructure. The whole value chain of the energy system – generation, transmission, distribution, as well as consumption – is being increasingly impacted by climate events. Droughts and floods significantly affect hydropower generation output. Transmission and distribution lines are at risk of storm and cyclone induced catastrophic damage, which could cause expensive power outages. It is important for LLDCs and their transit neighbors to develop climate change resilient transit infrastructure since transit infrastructure is the lifeline for enhanced connectivity of the LLDCs to the global market.

LLDCs have limited potential to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change. They lack both the financial and technical capacities. Reversing alongside mitigating the effects of climate change are crucial to reducing poverty and improving environmental sustainability. It is therefore necessary that support to the LLDCs to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change is enhanced.

Scaling-up and expansion of renewable energy in LLDCs is also important for helping them mitigate the impact of climate change. Renewable energy minimizes carbon pollution and has a much lower impact on the environment. Supporting LLDCs to increase production of modern and renewable energy will help implement the VPoA and address climate change.

Against this backdrop, it is important that partnerships from all stakeholders are harnessed to accelerate sustainable energy development in the LLDCs in particular renewable energy and to enhance resilience building to climate change. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an immense opportunity for all stakeholders to work collaboratively across sectors and thematic areas, forging partnerships for supporting implementation of the SDGs.
**Objective**
The meeting will provide a platform for LLDCs, transit countries, development partners, private sector, regional and international organizations to exchange experiences and ways to enhance partnerships for accelerating sustainable energy development in particular renewable energy in LLDCs and building resilience to climate change. The meeting will showcase good practices and lessons learned on the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in strengthening the capacities of LLDCs to accelerated sustainable energy development and resilience building.

**Organizers**
The event is co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Paraguay, the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

**Participants**
The meeting will bring together LLDCs; Transit developing countries; Development partners; regional and international organizations; international financial institutions, Private sector; NGOs and experts or practitioners in the areas of sustainable energy and climate change who can share experiences and best practices on how the LLDCs could accelerate sustainable energy and build resilience to climate change.

**Date and Venue**
The side-event will be held during the High-level Political Forum in New York at 1.15-2.30 p.m., on 12 July 2019 in Conference Room F, UNHQ.