



**Statement
By**

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Introducing

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of
the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for
the Decade 2011 to 2020 (A/75/72-E/2020/14)

At the Coordination and Management Meeting of ECOSOC

**3 June 2020, time TBC
Virtual meeting by Webex**

Chairperson, HE Mr Munir Akram,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to introduce the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (bearing symbol A/75/72-E/2020/14).

This report has been prepared in the run-up to the Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries.

Together with the online Statistical Annex, the report documents progress made over the full implementation period of the IPoA.

The report draws lessons learned from the experience of the LDCs and development partners.

The LDCs as a group, can record notable successes on access in areas such as access to electricity, ICT, and safe water and sanitation.

We can also see progress for several key indicators on poverty, health and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. What stands out is the unprecedented progress has been achieved towards graduation, with 12 LDCs at various stages in the process.

The IPOA set ambitious goals for achieving structural transformation and building productive capacity.

The program aimed at combating poverty through high rates of economic growth and the creation of decent jobs powered by export growth. These goals have not been realized.

The review of the implementation period highlight the alarming degree of vulnerability of the LDCs.

Declining commodity prices, especially since 2013, have diminished the value of exports and foreign currency earnings.

This exacerbates debt burdens. Add to this ever increasing natural hazards, especially climate-related phenomena such as hurricanes, cyclones, flooding, drought and landslides, have caused devastating loss and damage to lives, livelihoods and infrastructure.

Since we published the report, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about dramatic and unprecedented changes across the globe on a scale that none could have imagined.

What progress was hard won in the LDCs has already been eroded.

The threat looms of further major setbacks as the impacts of the pandemic continue to evolve, as we have heard last Thursday during the Secretary-General's high level event on Financing for Development.

Let there be no doubt, the negative impacts of the pandemic will be disproportionately felt in the LDCs. They were already vulnerable and now, we have even higher degree of vulnerability.

We just see the tip of the iceberg but we have already seen a dramatic decline in the demand for key LDC exports and a drop in prices for minerals.

The tourism sector, on which many LDCs are highly dependent, has taken a severe hit and we are very very far from recovery.

Closures and confinement measures are leading to rising unemployment, especially in the informal sector.

Migrants have been impacted, including their much-needed remittances.

The loss of livelihoods is projected to drive hundreds of millions back into poverty everywhere.

Health systems are being disrupted so that preventable illnesses can no longer be attended to.

Limited internet access and the lack of online alternatives exacerbate already fragile education systems and lead to school closings.

Food and nutrition insecurity is on the rise. At risk groups are increasing vulnerable.

The medium term picture before us is that: LDCs will suffer from declining GDP; will suffer from the loss of fiscal revenue, while having to meet the demands of financing stimulus packages. High debt situations will spiral and we will see acute indebtedness. We already see reduced FDI and we have uncertainty in ODA flows.

This situation requires immediate attention and action.

Of course, the pandemic has also disrupted the preparatory process for UNLDCV.

While several important events had to be postponed, this has not halted our momentum nor will it prevent us from ultimately crafting a robust and ambitious new Programme of Action.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the urgency with which we need to act. More than ever, we must look into turning a vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle.

I would like to extend my thanks to the LDC Member States and the Friends of the LDCs, especially the host of UNLDCV, for their resolve in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

Through a series of consultations, we have articulated the most pressing needs of the LDCs, and how the donor community and the UN can address COVID-19 in the LDCs and its impacts.

Under the leadership of the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, no effort is being spared to support the LDCs, and we will continue to do so.

In close consultation with the host country, the Member States and the various UN departments, we have begun to chart out a set of new dates and schedules for the preparatory meetings and conference.

I trust that we can come to a conclusion shortly.

I will be convening the UN system entities later this month to further this discussion.

I assure you of OHRLLS's full and unwavering support to the LDCs through this crisis and beyond.

Thank you.
