

**Triennial review report on the
implementation of the OIOS
recommendations in the report on
the evaluation of the United Nations
Office of the High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

9 May 2024

IED-2023-020



INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

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Summary

The present report is submitted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS-IED) as part of a regular follow-up exercise conducted at least three years after the completion of every General Assembly-mandated evaluation. The purpose of this triennial review was to determine the extent to which recommendations emanating from the OIOS evaluation of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLS) ([E/AC.51/2021/2](#)) were implemented.

Evidence was collected to verify the implementation of recommendations through: (a) a review of progress reports on the status of recommendations monitored by OIOS; (b) an analysis of relevant information and documentation obtained from OHRLS; and (c) interviews conducted with a sample of OHRLS staff members and representatives of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

OIOS determined that two recommendations (2 and 3) were fully implemented, and three recommendations (1, 4, and 5) were partially implemented.

Recommendation 1 urged OHRLS to develop and adopt an overarching advocacy strategy aligning activities to objectives and tracked with performance measures. The resultant strategy clearly linked activities to objectives, established a strategic planning process, integrated communication efforts into the broader advocacy framework, and identified opportunities for better leveraging of events and social media as advocacy tools. However, the strategy lacked targets and performance measures to track progress towards advocacy goals and did not define actions to enhance advocacy with United Nations senior leadership. Moreover, a specific plan for increasing regular communication with United Nations senior leadership was not provided, despite being one of the indicators of achievement. This recommendation was considered partially implemented.

Recommendation 2 solicited OHRLS, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Consultative Groups (IACGs) members, to strengthen the IACGs as coordination mechanisms around Programme of Action (PoA) implementation. This led to the formalization and reinforcement of the IACGs for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) through the development and adoption of their respective Terms of Reference. With this, the IACGs broadened their focus to include thematic and country-specific topics for discussion that promoted cooperation around PoA implementation. They played a crucial role in preparing for major conferences and encouraged the undertaking of joint interagency advocacy efforts among members. Rather than establishing workplans for IACGs meetings or assigning responsibilities for follow-up actions, the IACGs embedded stronger accountability into their outcomes by sensitizing United Nations System entities on the priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and promoting the integration of these priorities into their workplans, frameworks, and activities on the ground. Lastly, the IACGs established linkages to the revised coordination architecture for development at the global and regional levels by increasing engagement with the Resident Coordinator system on PoA implementation. This recommendation was considered fully implemented.

Recommendation 3 requested OHRLS to enhance knowledge management in the Office by promoting a more systematic and regular use of existing systems, as well as creating new systems where gaps existed. OHRLS accomplished this by organizing an Office-wide workshop on knowledge management, mainstreaming the use of SharePoint and other Microsoft Office tools, increasing utilization of the UniteDocs Correspondence Module, and improving tracking of interactions with stakeholders, among other steps. This recommendation was considered fully implemented.

Recommendation 4 asked OHRLS to incorporate gender and human rights more systematically into the work of the Office and its publications. OHRLS made considerable efforts to better assimilate gender and human rights into the structure, activities and outputs of the Office, including organizing

two Office-wide trainings in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Although the inclusion of human rights into the work of OHRLLS had improved, it was not as well integrated as gender and could have been better incorporated into the Office's publications. This recommendation was considered partially implemented.

Recommendation 5 advised the EOSG to identify opportunities for greater engagement of OHRLLS with the UNSDG and its members, particularly on issues of relevance to LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. The UNSDG strengthened its engagement with OHRLLS in preparation for the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS conferences. Despite not being a member of the UNSDG, OHRLLS pursued alternative avenues for engagement with UNSDG members. This recommendation was considered fully implemented.

I. Introduction and objective

1. The present report was prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS-IED) as part of a regular follow-up exercise conducted at least three years after the completion of every evaluation that is mandated by the General Assembly. The Committee for Programme and Coordination considered and discussed the OIOS report on the evaluation¹ of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) at its sixty-first session in June 2021.
2. The purpose of this triennial review was to determine the extent to which the five recommendations emanating from the 2020 OIOS evaluation of OHRLLS were implemented.
3. Evidence was collected to verify the implementation of recommendations through:
 - A review of progress reports on the status of recommendations monitored by OIOS.
 - An analysis of relevant information and documentation obtained from OHRLLS (e.g., strategy documents, TORs, knowledge products, Secretary General reports, etc.).
 - 10 interviews conducted with relevant OHRLLS staff.
 - 2 interviews conducted with representatives of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).
4. The report incorporated comments from OHRLLS during drafting. The final report was shared with the entity for its response, which is provided in the Annex. OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation and assistance provided by OHRLLS throughout the review process.

II. Background

5. OHRLLS was established in 2001 through General Assembly resolution 56/227 with the mandate to coordinate, advocate, and report on behalf of the three most vulnerable groups of countries: Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). These three constituencies comprise a total of 92 states, including 45 LDCs, 32 LLDCs, and 39 SIDS.²
6. The Office works with all relevant stakeholders inside and outside the United Nations System (UNS) to mobilize support for these three groups of countries in achieving the goals of their respective Programmes of Action (PoA) and other relevant internationally agreed development goals. These include the Doha PoA for LDCs (2022-2031), the Vienna PoA for LLDCs (2014-2024), the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014-2024), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction.
7. OHRLLS coordinates within the UNS to facilitate effective PoA implementation through three Inter-Agency Consultative Groups (IACG), one for each constituency. The Office convenes and chairs the meetings of the IACGs on LDCs and LLDCs, and it co-chairs the IACG on SIDS on an alternating basis with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) due to their split mandate on this category of Member States.

¹ [E/AC.51/2021/2](#)

² Some countries are classified into more than one of these three categories resulting in overlaps.

8. In 2022, the current High Representative was appointed at the Under-Secretary-General (USG) level, tasked with providing overall leadership and direction of OHRLLS. The Office is structured around three subprogrammes, one for each category of countries, as well as an Advocacy and Outreach Unit that is responsible for communication and outreach activities.

III. Recommendations

A. Recommendation 1: Overarching Advocacy Strategy

9. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

OHRLLS should develop an overarching advocacy strategy that clearly links activities to objectives tracked with performance measures. The strategy should:

- integrate communication efforts into a broader advocacy framework, including Office branding considerations;
- explore how to better leverage social media to raise global awareness around the issues of relevance to its three country groups;
- identify opportunities for better leveraging events and publications as advocacy tools;
- establish an iterative strategic planning process to set and refine targets for advocacy-related activities such as campaigns; and
- define activities to increase its advocacy with senior leadership in the United Nations, such as through regular communication with the EOSG.

Indicator of achievement: Establishment of OHRLLS advocacy strategy covering the above elements, including a specific plan for how to increase regular communication with senior United Nations leadership.

10. OHRLLS adopted an overarching advocacy strategy on 8 February 2022. The preparation of the strategy was led by a dedicated focal point, and its content was informed by extensive consultations both internally and externally.
11. The strategy underscored the integral role that advocacy plays in the work of OHRLLS, recognizing its place at the heart of the Office's mandate to advocate on behalf of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. It clearly laid out the roles and responsibilities of both the Office and its Advocacy and Outreach unit, emphasizing a shared Office-wide ownership and commitment to the delivery of its advocacy goals.
12. The strategy encouraged all staff members of OHRLLS to view themselves as advocates of the Office. In this vein, the Advocacy and Outreach unit organized a series of workshops on persuasive writing and digital advocacy in order to build the capacity of OHRLLS staff and strengthen their contributions to advocacy and outreach.
13. The Office's communications and advocacy work was guided by three main pillars – partnerships, promoting values, and solutions – which were mainstreamed into the work of each subprogramme. As part of this integrated approach, substantive departments developed their annual workplans outlining their priorities for the year and the Advocacy and Outreach Unit collaborated closely with each section, strategizing on how to advance their priorities effectively.

Communications

14. Building on the progress that had already been made in 2020, including the launch of a new and improved website for OHRLLS, the advocacy strategy sought to better integrate communication efforts within a broader advocacy framework.
15. A separate 'message book' was developed to serve as a central repository for all public messaging on the work of the Office and the priorities of the three constituencies. This comprehensive resource included advocacy and policy proposals, compelling quotes and narratives on key issues, as well as essential facts and figures. A similar document was prepared in anticipation of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) held in March 2023.
16. OHRLLS staff found the message book to be a useful reference that contributed to the enhanced professionalism, consistency, and efficiency of the Office's communication efforts. The book not only ensured that institutional memory was preserved and made information more readily accessible, but it also saved time in drafting and producing new materials.
17. The Office explored a rebranding initiative to enhance its visibility. The Advocacy and Outreach unit prepared suggestions for rebranding the Office, including creating a new acronym³ and improving the language and/or visual consistency of its logo, website, social media, business cards, email signatures, etc. However, it remained uncertain whether the new name and its associated rebranding suggestions could be implemented without inter-governmental action since the name of the Office was given in the General Assembly resolution that created OHRLLS.
18. Historically, OHRLLS leadership engaged in a limited manner with the media based on strategic need. To effectively advance the priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, OHRLLS and its leadership could consider increasing its media outreach, as proposed in objective five of the overarching advocacy strategy.

Social Media

19. The advocacy strategy also paved the way for more effective utilization of social media as a tool for raising global awareness around the main challenges and priorities of the three country groups. A dedicated social media strategy was prepared, providing a more detailed framework for achieving its social media objectives.
20. This included encouraging staff to create and use their personal social media accounts for advocacy purposes, elevating the Under-Secretary General's social media presence to explicitly establish her as the global vulnerability champion, building partnerships with diverse stakeholders for joint social media campaigns, formulating specific social media strategies for each subprogramme, and capitalizing on major events like LDC5.
21. One way in which the Office increased its social media presence and following was through an Instagram competition that asked young people from LDCs to share their stories related to jobs, climate and gender. The winners of this competition were invited to join a youth forum during LDC5 and participated in a series of events with world leaders.

³ The Office's existing acronym represents the three groups of countries that it serves. It is derived from the first letter of each group's acronym (one L for LDCs, another L for LLDCs, and an S for SIDS), making it a meta-acronym that encapsulates the Office's scope.

22. To fulfil its “advocates from within” approach, the Advocacy and Outreach Unit conducted workshops to build capacity for digital advocacy among OHRLLS staff. The current USG led this effort by maintaining an active presence on her social media platforms, resulting in a larger following than the Office itself.
23. Table 1 below illustrates limited progress in the Office’s social media presence in terms of number of followers.

Table 1: OHRLLS social media growth trends

Social Media Account	Follower Count		
	2020	Feb 2024	USG
X (previously Twitter)	3,950	8,479	10,700
Meta (previously Facebook)	4,758	6,400	-
Instagram	94	2,664	-
YouTube	106	466	-
Threads (started in 2023)	-	401	-
LinkedIn (started in 2023)	-	1,914	2,360

24. While most of the Office’s social media following was through Meta and X, the Advocacy and Outreach Unit began shifting away from using these channels due to Meta’s declining influence and X becoming an increasingly controversial space. LinkedIn, on the other hand, was becoming a more important platform for the Office, in part due to its more professionalized audience.
25. Despite some gains, several challenges posed a threat to the sustainability of these results. Managing social media accounts is a full-time commitment that requires expertise in graphic design, video production, marketing, and data analytics. Currently, this responsibility fell upon the three remaining members of the Advocacy and Outreach Unit among a myriad of higher-priority tasks assigned to these individuals.
26. OHRLLS made attempts to procure a suitable software package to obtain social media metrics but was unsuccessful due to various reasons. Acquiring this software would strengthen the Office’s capacity for social media analytics, offering valuable insights such as optimal times for posting content, the typology of content that is successful, and so on.

Events and Publications

27. Conferences and events provided another opportunity for advocacy efforts. The advocacy strategy had a dedicated section focused on preparing for LDC5, aiming to leverage it as an opportunity to increase awareness of the Office, recognize its efforts, and establish it as a key strategic partner.
28. LDC5 was a notable demonstration of an event being used effectively as an advocacy tool. The slogan “from potential to prosperity” helped reframe the narrative to emphasize the potential of LDCs rather than focusing solely on their challenges.
29. The conference garnered extensive positive feedback from participants and increased the visibility of OHRLLS, with one head of state hailing it as a “triumph of style and substance”. The Advocacy and Outreach Unit was applying the lessons learned from LDC5 to prepare for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) and the fourth International Conference on SIDS. However, OHRLLS lacked the same level of resources for these conferences that it had for LDC5.

30. Lastly, it was not clear how publications were leveraged as tools for advocacy as no evidence of this was provided by OHRLLS.

Performance Measures and Long-term Planning

31. The advocacy strategy was formulated amidst the unprecedented global pandemic in 2020, an unusual time for the Office. The strategy could not have foreseen the repeated postponement of LDC5, nor did it anticipate the subsequent scheduling of the SIDS and LLDC3 conferences. This confluence of factors put the Office in the extraordinary position of having to arrange three major conferences within the course of a year. In hindsight, the advocacy strategy was overly ambitious, failing to align with the capacity of the Office and its limited resources, both human and financial.
32. The advocacy strategy also proposed the formation of a taskforce with the purpose of meeting twice a year to monitor and assess progress towards the advocacy plan. This taskforce was to be comprised of one member from each subprogramme and the senior management team, as well as the entire Advocacy and Outreach team. However, this arrangement received some pushback from the other teams for being too onerous. The Advocacy and Outreach Unit decided to embed one of its team members as a focal point within each subprogramme instead.
33. These focal points were responsible for overseeing the communication efforts of each subprogramme, anticipating suitable opportunities for advocacy, developing messaging and content, and helping the subprogrammes push themselves to better integrate strategic communications into their planning. In other words, using communications to drive better outcomes, rather than merely as a reporting or cosmetic element at the end. This alternative worked well until the advocacy team lost most of its members due to staff turnover, and it could no longer be sustained.
34. Although the advocacy strategy clearly linked activities to objectives, no targets or performance measures were provided to track progress towards those activities and objectives. Planning tools such as the use of checklists⁴ and the taskforce were also not used. This further weakened the Office's capacity for long-term advocacy planning. OHRLLS would benefit from an updated advocacy strategy that is more practical and realistic and receives stronger support from leadership.

Other Challenges

35. The Office operated with a small number of staff that did not correspond to the importance of its mandate. By early 2024, the Advocacy and Outreach Unit had lost most of its team members due to staff turnover, leaving only one P-3 and a few interns supporting the work. The remaining team members were relatively new to the Office and were in a learning phase, compounding the loss of institutional memory resulting from the recent turnover. Consequently, the Advocacy and Outreach Unit was not equipped with enough experience or human resources to adequately implement the current advocacy strategy.
36. There had also been considerable turnover at the highest level of the Office, with four different USGs heading the Office within a two-year period. This lack of stability at the leadership level may have contributed to some of the deviations from what was planned in the advocacy strategy (e.g., rebranding, long-term planning, etc.).

⁴ Checklists were provided in the advocacy strategy as planning tools to be used before any advocacy activity to ensure the maximization of all strategic opportunities.

Advocacy with Senior Leadership

37. The advocacy strategy did not define activities to increase advocacy with senior leadership in the United Nations, nor did it provide a specific plan for increasing regular communication with senior United Nations leadership, despite this being one of the indicators of achievement in the OIOS recommendation.
38. Despite this omission, the USG regularly updated senior leadership on the activities of the Office and briefed the EOSG after every major mission or meeting. The meeting of the principals that the Secretary General (SG) convened during LDC5 offered another opportunity for OHRLLS to update senior management on the activities of the Office, as well as foster collaboration and establish partnership with other UNS entities. See section E related to recommendation 5 on EOSG facilitation of greater engagement between OHRLLS and the UNSDG.

Conclusion

39. OHRLLS developed and adopted an overarching advocacy strategy that clearly linked activities to objectives, established a strategic planning process, integrated communication efforts into the broader advocacy framework, and identified opportunities for better leveraging of events and social media as advocacy tools.
40. However, the strategy lacked targets and performance measures to track progress towards advocacy goals and did not define actions to enhance advocacy with United Nations senior leadership. Moreover, a specific plan for increasing regular communication with United Nations senior leadership was not provided, despite being one of the indicators of achievement.
41. Furthermore, the Office was yet to implement its new branding strategy, enhance measurement of its social media engagement, regularly and systematically engage with media, and leverage its publications as advocacy tools.
42. For these reasons, OIOS considers recommendation 1 to be partially implemented.

B. Recommendation 2: Strengthened IACGs

43. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

OHRLLS, in consultation with members, should strengthen the IACGs as a mechanism for coordination around PoA implementation including by:

- embedding stronger accountability into the meeting outcomes by establishing workplans where feasible and assigning clear responsibilities for follow-up action;
- identifying topics that promote coordinated work around PoA implementation, including joint advocacy activities such as campaigns and multi-stakeholder partnerships; and
- establishing linkages to the revised coordination architecture for development activities at the global and regional levels.

Indicators of achievement: Documentation of IACG activities covering the above points.

Terms of Reference for IACGs

44. The IACGs for LDCs and LLDCs were formalized and strengthened as mechanisms for coordination around PoA implementation through the development and adoption of their respective Terms of Reference (TOR) in November 2020. The drafting of each TOR was led by a focal point and informed by consultations with members of the IACGs on how to increase the groups' efficiency and effectiveness.
45. Although the IACG for SIDS already had a TOR in place at the time of the OIOS recommendation, steps were taken to strengthen it as a coordination mechanism for PoA implementation, including in the context of developing the new PoA. The TORs described the membership, main functions, and working methods of each IACG.
46. The primary purpose of the IACGs was to provide a forum for representatives of UNS entities and other member organizations to meet regularly and exchange information regarding their work on LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS. These meetings aimed to improve the coordination of activities, avoid any overlap or duplication of work, and identify areas for enhanced coherence, complementarity, and synergy. This was established bearing in mind each entity's comparative advantages, expertise, and mandate.
47. The IACGs were also responsible for facilitating the coordinated and inclusive preparation of the Secretary General's reports on PoA implementation. The IACGs for LDCs and LLDCs had the additional duty of developing, implementing, and regularly monitoring the comprehensive roadmaps for the accelerated implementation of the Doha⁵ and Vienna PoAs.⁶

Embedding Stronger Accountability

48. OHRLLS was not an implementing agency with presence on the ground in its constituent member states. Therefore, it relied on the entire UNS to collectively support PoA implementation.
49. Through the IACGs, OHRLLS was able to operationalize the priorities of the three groups of countries that it represented by sensitizing UNS entities and encouraging them to assimilate these priorities into their workplans, frameworks, and activities on the ground. For example, OHRLLS reportedly prompted the chair of the IACG for LDCs to correspond with the chairs of the governing bodies of UNS agencies, emphasizing the need to integrate the Doha PoA into their priorities.
50. This was one approach the IACGs used to embed stronger accountability into their outcomes, as opposed to establishing workplans for IACG meetings or assigning responsibilities for follow-up actions. It was a high-level effort that subsequently cascaded down into the workplans of UNS entities.
51. Notwithstanding the above, there were instances of responsibilities being assigned for follow-up actions. For instance, when a Member State asked for a specific form of support or technical assistance, the IACGs coordinated with UNS entities to identify the most suitable ones to contribute and support. Occasionally, UNS entities voluntarily assumed the lead role in such endeavours.

⁵ <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/roadmap-doha-programme>

⁶ https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/roadmap_for_accelerated_implementation_of_vpo_a_19august2020.pdf

52. The IACGs for LDCs and LLDCs also strengthened accountability across the UNS through the roadmaps for the accelerated implementation of the Doha and Vienna PoAs.

Shift to a More Specific Thematic and Country-Level Focus

53. One of the main functions of the IACGs was to identify thematic and country-specific topics for discussion that promote coordinated work around PoA implementation.
54. The OIOS evaluation emphasized the need for IACG meetings to go beyond simply being information sharing platforms. Prior to the OIOS recommendation, IACG meetings primarily consisted of UNS entities taking turns sharing updates on their work related to LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, respectively.
55. While these exchanges continued to occur, the IACGs had broadened their scope by organizing additional meetings focused on specific themes or concrete plans of action based on PoA priorities. OHRLLS staff recognized these targeted meetings as being more effective for coordinating PoA implementation than the generic information sharing sessions.
56. An example of successful coordination around a specific thematic focus was the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility (iGRAD), an interagency taskforce on LDC graduation that was set up by the IACG on LDCs to provide additional support to graduating LDCs. The taskforce coordinated to support the formulation of a smooth transition strategy and establish a co-lead system per country. Another good example was the coordination by the IACG on SIDS to obtain inputs from UNS entities for the multidimensional vulnerability index.
57. Sometimes the IACGs scheduled specific meetings based on requests for assistance by Member States. These meetings complemented the work being done in a country by looping in agencies that were not part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) but were nevertheless relevant to providing the requested assistance and supporting PoA implementation in the country.

Conferences

58. Since the adoption of its TOR, a significant focus of the IACG for LDCs was on preparing for LDC5, which took place in March 2023 after being postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The IACG for LDCs held a series of coordination meetings to prepare for LDC5 in close collaboration with UNS entities, which were involved at all stages of the process.
59. LDC5 saw a high degree of participation and engagement from UNS entities. Over 90 side events with UNS entities were organized over the course of five days, aimed at announcing deliverables and advancing the objectives of the Doha PoA.
60. One of the key achievements of the IACG coordination work was the meeting of the principals convened by the Secretary-General during LDC5, which saw participation from heads of offices across the UNS. During this meeting, the Secretary-General called upon the principals to announce two to three commitments on behalf of their respective agencies to support the LDCs in implementing the Doha PoA.
61. This was a good illustration of how OHRLLS was able to mainstream the priorities of LDCs across the UNS and translate the Doha PoA into activities on the ground. OHRLLS tracked progress towards the fulfilment of these commitments through the IACG for LDCs, demonstrating another avenue through which the IACGs promoted greater accountability.
62. Drawing from the successful experiences and good practices from LDC5, OHRLLS was relying on the IACGs for LLDCs and SIDS to coordinate with UNS entities in preparation for the LLDC3

and SIDS conferences scheduled to take place in 2024. The IACGs invited UNS entities to submit proposals for side events during the conferences, and a meeting of the principals was also expected to be convened by the Secretary-General during these two conferences.

Roadmaps

63. Following the conclusion of LDC5, the IACG on LDCs shifted its focus towards formulating a roadmap for the accelerated implementation of the Doha PoA. This roadmap set forth the actions to be undertaken by various stakeholders to address the myriad challenges and vulnerabilities faced by LDCs and help them realize their potential for sustainable and inclusive development. It also encompassed the wide array of commitments made by the private sector, parliaments, youth, and UNS entities during LDC5.
64. Developed in close collaboration with the UNS, this roadmap was the culmination of extensive consultations, meetings, and information requests facilitated by the IACG for LDCs. It outlined 35 priority targets with corresponding actions and deliverables across the six key action areas of the Doha PoA. The roadmap featured a complex matrix of indicators and milestones for monitoring and measuring progress, ensuring comprehensive coverage and alignment with overarching objectives. It also identified entry points for UNS entities and other stakeholders to incorporate the Doha PoA into their policies, plans, and programmes.
65. Similarly, the IACG for LLDCs developed a roadmap for the accelerated implementation of the Vienna PoA. However, this document was elaborated in response to the midterm review of the Vienna PoA, which revealed insufficient progress towards achieving its targets. In contrast, the Doha roadmap was prepared at the outset of the PoA with the intention of being a living document that was expected to be updated midway through the process, showcasing the forward-thinking approach and fortified coordination mechanism of the IACGs.
66. These roadmaps were valuable resources for all stakeholders involved in advancing the objectives of the Doha and Vienna PoAs. They also served as prime examples of how the IACGs embedded stronger accountability into their outcomes and assigned responsibilities for follow-up actions.

Interagency Initiatives

67. Another function of the IACGs was to encourage the undertaking of joint interagency initiatives such as projects, missions, trainings, studies, reports, and advocacy activities among its members. For instance, the IACG on LDCs participated in the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CPD), an independent expert body under DESA tasked with assessing the progress made by LDCs and graduated LDCs.⁷
68. Every three years, the CPD reviewed the progress made by LDCs against measurements of income, human assets, and vulnerability, and made recommendations to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for a country to graduate out of this group.
69. Countries became eligible for recommendation for graduation if they met two out of three criteria in two consecutive triennial reviews, or if they exceeded three times the income threshold with sustainable revenue.⁸ However, graduation entailed the loss of certain benefits reserved exclusively for LDCs (e.g., LDC-specific development or technical assistance, lower interest rates, preferential market access, differential treatment in World Trade Organization

⁷ <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/committee-development-policy-cdp-0#:~:text=The%20CDP%20is%20a%20subsidiary,a%20period%20of%20three%20years.>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/ldc-criteria.html>

agreements, and so on).⁹ Although LDC graduation was a rare occurrence, there were 14 LDCs in the graduation pipeline at the time this report was written.

70. The interagency taskforce on LDC graduation (described in para 55) was another important platform through which coordination among members took place.¹⁰

Engagement with the RC System

71. Lastly, the IACGs established linkages to the revised coordination architecture for development activities by increasing engagement with the Resident Coordinator (RC) system for PoA implementation at the country level. These increased efforts to work with the RCs included virtual meetings on the Doha PoA, as well as setting up a community of practice for RCs of LDCs and LLDCs for the implementation of the Doha and Vienna PoAs. The RCs had also been invited to lead side events during the LLDC3 and SIDS conferences.

Conclusion

72. OHRLLS formalized and strengthened the IACGs for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS as coordination mechanisms for PoA implementation through the development and adoption of their respective TORs. The IACGs also expanded their focus to include thematic and country-specific topics for discussion that promoted cooperation around PoA implementation; played a crucial role in preparing for major conferences; encouraged the undertaking of joint interagency advocacy efforts among its members; and established linkages to the revised coordination architecture for development at the global and regional levels by increasing engagement with the RC system on PoA implementation.
73. Rather than establishing workplans for IACG meetings or assigning responsibilities for follow-up actions, the IACGs embedded stronger accountability into their outcomes by sensitizing UNS entities on the priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, and promoting the integration of these priorities into their workplans, frameworks, and activities on the ground.
74. Based on the activities and achievements described above, OIOS considers recommendation 2 to be fully implemented.

C. Recommendation 3: Enhanced Knowledge Management

75. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

OHRLLS should enhance knowledge management in the Office to ensure more systematic and regular use of the systems already in place, and to create new systems or mechanisms where gaps may exist. OHRLLS may consider holding an Office-wide workshop to discuss how to further enhance approaches for knowledge capture and use, such as managing advocacy-related information from notes-to-file.

Indicators of achievement: Evidence of enhanced knowledge management including documentation on related internal decisions and process changes.

76. OHRLLS bolstered its knowledge management practices through several initiatives. These included making the OHRLLS website more user-friendly; digitizing all documents and knowledge products to reduce reliance on hard copies; optimizing the search function to make

⁹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/2023-cdp-policy.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/sustainable-graduation-support-facility>

documents easier to find; transitioning from desktop computers to laptops to support remote work; and organizing an Office-wide workshop on knowledge management and sharing.

77. The training took place in 2023 and taught staff how to use the Microsoft Office suite of digital tools, which includes SharePoint, Teams, Outlook, Planner, and Forms. The workshop also discussed methods for enhancing knowledge capture and use, such as managing advocacy-related information from notes-to-file.
78. The integration of these tools markedly improved information storage, management, and sharing within the Office, resulting in more efficient workstreams and reduced email correspondence. Notably, administrative personnel were able to streamline the collection of information from meeting participants by adopting Microsoft Forms. They previously collected information individually via email, which required time-consuming manual extraction. Using Microsoft Forms, the data collected was automatically populated into an Excel spreadsheet, saving the administrative personnel time and effort.
79. Furthermore, the use of Microsoft Planner strengthened the organization and management of tasks, particularly for large events. The task list was accessible to everyone in the Office and allowed teams to keep track of completed and pending tasks. It also displayed the deadline and identified the person to whom each task was assigned, fostering greater clarity and accountability within the Office.

SharePoint

80. SharePoint further transformed the way OHRLLS worked, emerging as the digital backbone for knowledge management in the Office. Prior to the OIOS recommendation, this tool was not in use. Thereafter, all the Office's work was stored on SharePoint sites that were accessible to all staff. Moreover, a dedicated SharePoint site was created for the purpose of collaborating with other UNS entities on the logistical aspects of organizing LDC5.
81. The use of SharePoint became so widespread that the Office's available storage capacity was exceeded. OHRLLS was faced with the cumbersome task of reviewing every file saved on SharePoint to determine retention or deletion.
82. Another issue stemmed from the absence of a structured procedure for organizing the information on SharePoint. As a result, information was archived in a disorganized manner that made search and retrieval difficult.
83. To address these challenges, the Office appointed focal points responsible for devising a set of standardized practices for storing, managing, and sharing information (e.g., using naming conventions).

Tracking Interactions with Stakeholders

84. Another avenue through which the Office enhanced knowledge management was by implementing a more coherent approach and structure for tracking interactions with stakeholders and capturing strategic information.
85. Given the advocacy-oriented nature of the Office's activities, OHRLLS personnel regularly engaged with Member States and interagency representatives. Therefore, whenever a bilateral meeting occurred, pertinent documents such as talking points, meeting minutes, background information, and follow-up actions were uploaded to SharePoint.
86. This relatively simple step revamped collaboration within the Office, enabling better tracking of follow-up actions and frequency of interactions with each stakeholder. As a result, the

Office became better equipped to capture and advance the priorities of the three categories of Member States that it represents.

87. Nevertheless, with the continued expansion in staffing resulting in increasing engagement opportunities with stakeholders, there remained a need to develop an even more systematic way of recording and tracking these interactions.

Data Management

88. The Office produced and accumulated numerous reports, data, and statistics relevant to LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, yet lacked a systematic method for compiling and organizing this information.
89. Even though there had been some efforts to accomplish this through the message book (discussed in para. 15) the Office did not have a mechanism to bring together data sets, indicators, and key facts into a centralized repository that everyone could draw from without the need for additional research.
90. Although this information was known to exist, it was collected separately and scattered across various sources. Consolidating this disparate data into a standardized resource would make the information easier to find and use.

Correspondence Module of UniteDocs

91. Just like SharePoint, the Correspondence Module of UniteDocs was not previously used at OHRLLS. The Office provided examples of how the module was used to generate reference numbers and dispatch memos to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. It was primarily used by administrative staff to record and classify all outgoing correspondence, which occasionally caused bottlenecks. The module was found to be somewhat cumbersome and inflexible, with only one possible way of filling it out. Due to these limitations, the United Nations Secretariat indicated that the module might be replaced by a more versatile tool.

Conclusion

92. OHRLLS enhanced knowledge management in the Office by organizing an Office-wide workshop on knowledge management, mainstreaming the use of SharePoint and other Microsoft Office tools, increasing utilization of the UniteDocs Correspondence Module, and improving tracking of interactions with stakeholders, among other steps.
93. OIOS considers recommendation 3 to be fully implemented, albeit with some remaining areas for improvement.

D. Recommendation 4: Better Integration of Gender and Human Rights

94. Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

OHRLLS should consider how to more systematically integrate gender and human rights into its reports, as relevant.

Indicators of achievement: Evidence of efforts undertaken, including staff training, to improve integration of gender and human rights into publications.

Workshops

95. OHRLLS offered two Office-wide trainings on 13 October 2021 designed to improve the mainstreaming of gender and human rights into its work, reporting and publications. These sessions, facilitated by the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), were organized in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
96. Specifically tailored to the work of the Office and its report and publication types, the workshops covered a wide range of topics, from a review of indicators, data, and methodologies to strategies for enhancing the quality of statements and analyses.

Gender

97. Gender was well integrated into the structure, activities and outputs of the Office, including the Doha PoA, SAMOA Pathway, Secretary General's reports, strategies, documents, publications, reporting requirements, staffing, meetings, events, and advocacy efforts.
98. The Office partnered with the International Seabed Authority to launch the Women in Deep-Sea Research project in 2021. This resulted in a joint publication identifying the critical barriers faced by women scientists from LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS in deep-sea research¹¹.
99. OHRLLS participated in the UNS-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and provided gender disaggregated data when reporting on PoA implementation.
100. Gender parity was prioritized in staffing decisions, as evidenced by the two most recent USG compacts (2022 and 2023) and the fact that the USG and most team leads in the Office were women.
101. LDC5 featured several side events addressing gender, led by a variety of stakeholders such as the Civil Society Forum,¹² Parliamentary Forum,¹³ Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World,¹⁴ and UN Women.¹⁵
102. In upcoming conferences, OHRLLS planned to place significant emphasis on the equal participation of women among civil society organizations and youth. It also planned to convene a meeting of women leaders from various sectors (e.g., government, civil society, youth, UNS, etc.) to underscore the role of women as agents of change in advancing the PoAs.
103. However, gender was notably absent from the Vienna PoA, making it an important priority for the forthcoming PoA for LLDCs.

¹¹ Empowering women from LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in deep-sea research, 30 June 2022, OHRLLS.

<https://www.isa.org.jm/publications/empowering-women-from-ldcs-lldc-and-sids-in-deep-sea-research/>

¹² https://www.un.org/ldc5/sites/www.un.org.ldc5/files/ldc5_civil_society_forum_report.pdf

¹³ https://www.un.org/ldc5/sites/www.un.org.ldc5/files/parliamentary_forum_en.pdf

¹⁴ <https://owsd.net/news/news-events/owsd-5th-united-nations-conference-least-developed-countries-unldc5>

¹⁵ <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/events/2021/07/realizing-human-rights-and-gender-equality-least-developed-countries>

Human Rights

104. Human rights were addressed in the Doha PoA, SAMOA Pathway, SG reports, strategies, documents, meetings, events, and advocacy efforts.
105. OHCHR was very engaged in the work of OHRLLS, and vice versa. OHRLLS participated in a panel of a Regional Seminar Series led by OHCHR on the contribution of the Doha PoA to the enjoyment of all human rights in Africa.¹⁶ The Office also contributed to a discussion on LDCs and the right to development during the sixth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, a subsidiary body of OHCHR.¹⁷
106. OHCHR arranged two side events for LDC5. One of these focused on the active, free, and meaningful participation of youth in development and in the implementation of the Doha PoA. The other aimed to highlight the importance of mainstreaming human rights and realization of the right to development in the implementation of the Doha PoA.¹⁸
107. OHRLLS also prepared an online briefing session in close partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs (DPPA) about climate-related security risks and human rights challenges and opportunities in SIDS.¹⁹
108. While the inclusion of human rights into the work of OHRLLS had improved, it was not as explicitly evident as gender. Human rights could have been better incorporated into the Office's reports and publications with the potential for greater integration in the next PoA for LLDCs.

Conclusion

109. OHRLLS made considerable efforts to better integrate gender and human rights into the structure, activities and outputs of the Office, including organizing two Office-wide trainings in collaboration with UN Women and OHCHR.
110. Although the inclusion of human rights into the work of OHRLLS had improved, it was not as well integrated as gender and could have been better incorporated into the Office's publications.
111. For these reasons, OIOS considers recommendation 4 to be partially implemented.

E. Recommendation 5: Greater Engagement with UNSDG

112. Recommendation 5 reads as follows:

EOSG should identify opportunities for greater engagement of OHRLLS with the UNSDG and its members, particularly on issues of the most relevance to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Indicators of achievement: Evidence of greater OHRLLS engagement with UNSDG.

113. The UNSDG is a high-level forum for collaborative policy formulation and decision-making, overseeing the coordination of development operations in 162 countries and territories.

¹⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/meetings/2022/africa-regional-seminar>

¹⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/sessions/2022/sixth-session-expert-mechanism-right-development>

¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/ldc5/side-events-5>

¹⁹ <https://www.un.org/ohrls/events/climate-change-and-security-human-rights-challenges-and-opportunities-small-island-developing>

OHRLLS was not a member of the UNSDG due to its lack of operational presence on the ground. Nonetheless, OHRLLS worked closely with UNSDG members as the work of the forum was highly focused on taking forward actions for the three groups of Member States represented by the Office.

Coordination with DESA

114. OHRLLS was represented by DESA in the UNSDG, requiring some coordination between the two entities preceding UNSDG meetings to ensure that the interests of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS were adequately represented in this forum. However, this coordination did not occur.
115. Similarly, following the UNSDG meetings, OHRLLS did not receive updates on issues relevant to the three categories of countries. Instead, OHRLLS waited to learn about UNSDG meeting outcomes from reports that it received.
116. As such, this arrangement did not benefit OHRLLS with its specific focused mandate and programme encompassing the most vulnerable and least vocal subgroups.

Engagement with the UNSDG

117. Despite not being a member of the UNSDG, OHRLLS bore the responsibility of ensuring that the priorities it advocated for were integrated into the work of UNS entities, which required proactive efforts from the Office to flag agenda items for discussion with the UNSDG.
118. Alternative avenues for engagement with UNSDG members existed outside of UNSDG meetings. OHRLLS had its own interagency coordination mechanisms through which it could convene some UNSDG members. There were instances where the Office successfully engaged United Nations principals through the IACGs.
119. The Office was working more closely with RCs and UNCTs in an effort to bridge the gap between what was agreed upon through PoAs and various international agreements and what was implemented at the country level. OHRLLS had also intensified its engagement with RCs given the latter's reporting relationship with the Secretary-General and the DSG to ensure that the various PoAs were taken up in the new generation of sustainable development cooperation frameworks. Subsequently, the RC reporting framework added a specific indicator to measure results on countries in special situations, which included the three groups of Member States that OHRLLS represents.²⁰
120. The Office allocated funds to facilitate the participation of RCs in LDC5, where they provided active support to their respective host country delegations. OHRLLS organized several meetings with the RCs in anticipation of the LLDC3 conference to explore strategies for promoting national level participation.
121. The UNSDG strengthened its engagement with OHRLLS in preparation for LDC5 and continued to do so for the upcoming LLDC3 and SIDS conferences. These conferences offered another opportunity for engagement between OHRLLS and the UNSDG members, in expectation of high-level representation from across the UNS.
122. For instance, the Secretary-General convened a meeting of the principals during LDC5 to discuss how they would take forward the implementation of the Doha PoA. The Secretary-

²⁰ https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/d7-files/files/documents/2023/rcs_results_framework_april_2023.pdf

General was also expected to convene meetings of the principals during the LLDC3 and SIDS conferences in 2024.

123. Moreover, the Secretary-General convened the Senior Management Group (SMG), a high-level body of which OHRLLS was a member, which gathered leaders across the entire UNS in preparation for LDC5 to strategize and discuss expectations for engagement.
124. Lastly, there were regular interactions between the USG of OHRLLS and the DSG to strategize for the various conferences and discuss how to enhance support to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, which remained a priority for the SG and the DSG.

Enhanced Advocacy and Influence of OHRLLS

125. The myriad ways in which OHRLLS engaged and interacted with United Nations senior leadership contributed to elevating the priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS to the highest levels. As a result, these priorities were strongly embedded into the way the UNSDG was supporting countries.
126. There had also been a systematic effort by United Nations senior leadership and the UNSDG to ensure that the advocacy work for these priority constituencies was translated programmatically, making sure it permeated the work of UNS entities through the RC system and the UNCTs on the ground.
127. The Secretary-General reported on the results of these efforts in the 2023 report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the UNS.²¹ This report summarized the findings from a series of surveys conducted by DESA in early 2023 for the purpose of tracking progress towards meeting the QCPR mandate.²²
128. All surveyed LDCs and LLDCs affirmed the close alignment of development system activities with their needs and priorities, a sentiment echoed by 94 per cent of SIDS.
129. Effective cooperation frameworks were one key mechanism driving this improved alignment. Over 95 per cent of surveyed LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS reported that cooperation frameworks enabled Governments to ensure that development system activities effectively addressed national priorities.
130. The appropriate configuration of UNCTs was another important mechanism for ensuring alignment with national priorities. All surveyed LDCs and LLDCs considered that these configurations were adequately tailored to meet their specific needs and challenges in 2022, while 79 per cent of SIDS shared this view.
131. Satisfaction among SIDS with the alignment of the United Nations development system support saw a notable rise in 2022, with 95 per cent of SIDS reporting satisfaction, up from 84 per cent in 2021 and 70 per cent in 2019. This increased satisfaction can be attributed in part to greater capacity and coordination on the ground, enhanced engagement at all levels, and the reforms of the multi-country RC offices, which serve almost all SIDS.

²¹ <https://undocs.org/a/78/72>

²² <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/what-we-do/oas-qcpr/un-secretary-generals-reports-qcpr/2023-secretary-generals-report>

Conclusion

132. In view of these achievements, OIOS considers recommendation 5 to be fully implemented.

Annex I

Comments received from the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN- OHRLLS)

1. OHRLLS welcomes the OIOS triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made by the OIOS evaluation of OHRLLS in 2021. We appreciate the thorough review conducted by OIOS and the constructive feedback provided.
 2. OHRLLS is pleased that OIOS has determined that three recommendations (2, 3 and 5) were fully implemented, and two recommendations (1 and 4) were partially implemented. We accept the findings of the review and are committed to addressing the remaining areas for improvement identified.
 3. OHRLLS expresses its gratitude to OIOS for this constructive review and reiterates its steadfast commitment to delivering on our mandate to support the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
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