



The least developed countries (LDCs) are disproportionately affected by climate change and its induced natural disasters although contributing the least to climate change. Constrained by scarce financial resources, limited institutional capacity and lack of technological know-how, they are also least able to recover from climate stresses. Their economic growth is highly dependent on climate-sensitive sectors, and lack of resilient infrastructure has long impeded progress towards the SDGs and targets and goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA).

Extreme weather events such as high temperatures, floods, cyclones, and sea level rise are imposing high economic and social costs on the LDCs. [1] Pacific SIDS/LDCs are among the most vulnerable to climate change-related risks and natural calamities. Climate change poses existential threats to Pacific SIDS/LDCs. In addition to human fatality, climate-related displacement has become an emerging challenge confronting SIDS/LDCs in the region. The climate change impacts are becoming more acute, and affect food insecurity, water scarcity, land degradation, melting of glaciers, ocean acidification, coastal erosion, damage to infrastructure and assets, displacement of populations, disruption of indigenous and traditional lifestyles, etc. In particular, natural OM

The new Programme of Action for the LDCs presents a unique opportunity to support green and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to enhance resilience-building of LDCs against future economic and environmental shocks and health risks. For the LDCs, this underlines the need to integrate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies into policies, and an increased need for investments in key sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a grave threat to Asia-Pacific LDCs on an unprecedented scale. It has halted the si



partners and the global community should significantly increase their support to Asia-Pacific LDCs to implement national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction strategies. It is of vital importance to continue to support governments of graduating LDCs in the region by promoting the integration of disaster risk reduction into the smooth transition strategies, to prevent regression back into the LDC category following an external shock.

Availability of and access to affordable and uninterrupted energy supplies is critical for developing productive capacity. Access to electricity among Asia-Pacific LDCs rose sharply from 55.4 per cent in 2010 to 87.3 per cent in 2018; the current global average for LDCs is just 51.6 per cent. More than 90 per cent of the population of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Nepal have access to electricity, and 100 per cent of the population of Bhutan, Kiribati and Tuvalu have access.[8]

One of the targets of the IPoA is to raise the total primary energy supply (TPES) per capita to the same level as that of other developing countries. During the implementation period, TPES per capita in Bangladesh rose from 0.20 tons of oil equivalent (toe) in 2010 to 0.25 toe in 2017; for Cambodia, from 0.38 to 0.52; and for Myanmar, from 0.28 to 0.43. Despite these gains, TPES remained far below the average for developing countries of 2.1 toe. Overall, the per capita electricity consumption increased in all Asia-Pacific LDCs.[9]

However, ensuring an energy supply that is uninterrupted, affordable, reliable, and clean remains a significant challenge. Moreover, inefficiencies in production and transmission and distribution systems result in a sizable proportion of energy being wasted at various stages of the generation and transmission system. [10]

The pathway to net-zero emissions requires a substantial increase in the share of renewable energy. Electricity generation from renewable sources also needs to be further strengthened given the rising demand for energy to sustain economic growth while addressing climate impacts. Despite the strong emphasis placed under the IPoA, progress in these areas has been mixed and uneven.[11]

Despite the immense renewable potential of the energy sector in Asia-Pacific LDCs these countries rarely benefit from larger financing schemes to the same extent as more prosperous, developing countries. While public finance remains a significant source of global renewables investments and key to leveraging private finance, financial flows to LDCs remain far short of the level required to meet energy targets by 2030. Of the USD14 billion commitments to developing countries in support of clean energy in 2018, USD2.8 billion were allocated to LDCs. Over the period 2010-2018, LDCs received just 1.2 per cent of the USD2.8 billion in clean energy financing.

While dedicated funds have been set up to assist LDCs in addressing climate change, available resources are limited and the LDCs face capacity constraints in accessing finance. Accessing these funds is complex and time consuming. [12] To date, the scale and pace of funding and support for LDC has fallen far short of the required amounts.

With 10 out of the 12 Asia-Pacific LDCs in the graduation pipeline, LDCs in the region are facing the imminent challenge of losing access to climate funds reserved for LDCs. Graduated LDCs will lose access to the LDCF which supports programme under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) after their graduation. LDCs and SIDS are given special priority in funds allocation from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). While graduated LDCs will continue to have access to the GCF, graduating Asian LDCs that are not SIDS would no longer benefit from the priority given to LDCs and SIDS. Graduated LDCs will get access to the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)S

