CONCEPT NOTE

LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Regional workshop for the Africa region

"Assessing the value of the activities of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund in fulfilling its training and capacity-building mandate: Identifying achievements and areas of improvement"

Cotonou, Benin, 20 to 22 May 2025

Introduction

The workshop for the Africa region is being organized by the Secretariat of the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council (LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund), administered by the Human Rights Council Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It will consist of two segments: the first three-day segment is specifically focused on the activities of the Trust Fund and the second is a peer-to-peer exchange on national implementation, reporting and follow-up mechanisms and other national processes supporting the implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

Host

Government of Benin

Guests of Honor

His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber (Switzerland), President of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 19th cycle (2025)

Participants

It is projected that there will be a maximum of 35-40 participants in the workshop as follows:

- 30 former beneficiary delegates and fellows of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund from the Africa region, from June 2021 to March 2025, from the following 28 countries: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia;
- The President of the Human Rights Council;
- Resource persons from other regions (Asia, Caribbean and the Pacific);
- OHCHR Staff based in Geneva;

- The Permanent Representative from the Permanent Mission of Host Country of the Workshop based in Geneva;
- Representative of a country member of the Forum of Small States (FOSS) based in Geneva
- Representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Representative of la Francophonie
- Representative of CARICOM based in Geneva or New York

Background and Mandate of the Workshop

This regional workshop in the Africa region is being organized pursuant to HRC resolution 49/32 (2022) which "encourages the Trust Fund to support the conduct of a regional workshop in Africa, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, with government officials, including former beneficiaries of the Trust Fund, before the fifteenth anniversary of the Trust Fund in 2027, reflecting on its achievements, identifying where further improvements to the activities of the Trust Fund might be made and assessing the value of its activities in fulfilling its training and capacity-building mandate in support of the engagement of least developed countries and small island developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms." This workshop is the second in the series of four regional workshops organized pursuant to this resolution. The first was held in Malé, Maldives from 3 to 5 December 2024, which led to a number of recommendations in follow-up to the 2022 Malé Declaration.

Objectives

The three-day workshop aims to:

- Adopt a set of actionable recommendations to further improve the activities of the Trust Fund in fulfilling its training and capacity-building mandate in support of the engagement of LDCs/SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.
- Assess the contribution of the Trust Fund in building the capacity of LDCs/SIDS for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Africa region, by providing the opportunity for Member States to benefit from the expertise and experience among themselves, including States from other regions that have developed best practices to be shared in engaging with the HRC and its mechanisms.
- Identifying methodologies and approaches beneficiary delegates might use to identify practical courses of action to be recommended for implementation to their Governments following their participation in the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund programmes.
- Serve as a unique forum for an open and interactive dialogue on approaches and procedures to ensure that human rights challenges of concern to the region are placed and remain on the HRC agenda, and that best opportunities are identified to address them.

- Making specific recommendations regarding the further strengthening of participation of LDCs/SIDS in the work of the HRC and its mechanisms.
- Making additional focused recommendations on topics that are of primary importance to the Africa region, for example:
    - The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; climate change and human rights
    - Migration trends in the Africa region and its impact on human rights
    - SDGs and human rights, with a focus on building back better from the Covid-19
- Facilitate the exchange of good practice on national implementation, reporting and follow-up processes and mechanisms for implementing the recommendations of human rights mechanisms, including those of the UNHRC.

General outcome of the Workshop

OHCHR is mandated by Council res. 49/32 to prepare a report, based on the outcomes of the consultations in the four regional groups, in which the Office evaluates the activities of the Trust Fund to increase the engagement of LDCs/SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council, which will be presented to the HRC at its sixty-fourth session (March 2027). The comments and recommendations on training and capacity-building emanating from the Workshop will serve as the Africa region's contribution to the report of OHCHR. Similarly, good practices on national implementation, reporting and follow-up mechanisms and other national processes could be published on the future virtual knowledge hub for national mechanisms, mandated by Council Resolution 51/33.

Principal Outcome of the Workshop

To develop and agree on a **set of actionable recommendations in follow-up to the 2021 Ouagadougou-Port Louis Declaration** (adopted at the virtual regional workshop for the Africa region held in 2021) with the aim to further improving the Trust Fund's training and capacity-building activities in support of strengthening the engagement of the LDCs/SIDS in the Africa region in the work of the Human Rights Council by 2027.

Workshop modalities

The workshop will comprise a combination of **plenary** and **breakout group sessions.**

The Rapporteur of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Africa Region will be a former beneficiary delegate from the Africa region. The Rapporteur, together with the resource persons (also former beneficiaries) representing other regions, and with the support of the rapporteurs of

the break-out groups will present a summary of the plenary and break-out group sessions. This drafting group of rapporteurs and resource persons will also prepare draft recommendations for the Workshop participants' consideration on the last day of the Workshop.

Working Language of the Workshop

English and French with simultaneous interpretation.