

LDC GROUP CHARTER

**Least Developed Countries Group
on Climate Change**

Definition:

- LDC Chair: the ‘LDC Chair’ refers to the chairing country, and the representative of the chairing country who is elected by the LDC Group and mandated to represent or negotiate on behalf of the Group in the multilateral process of the UNFCCC and related events and to coordinate the work of the LDC Group in association with UNFCCC and related events. The LDC Chair shall also coordinate activities that involve:
 - LDC Ministers
 - LDC Elders
 - LDC Election Committee
 - Technical lead for LDC initiatives
 - Thematic Coordinators/co-coordinators.

Preamble

1. We the peoples and governments of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) cooperate as the LDC Group to continue progressive climate actions that align with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement of limiting the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience, and making financial flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emissions pathways.
2. In the context of the global response to climate change, Article 4.9 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) mandates its Parties to “take full account of the specific needs and special situations of the least developed countries in their actions with regard to funding and transfer of technology”, a call that is repeated in the 2015 Paris Agreement which highlights LDCs as countries that have significant capacity constraints and are particularly vulnerable to climate change.
3. United behind shared common interests and circumstances, the LDCs have been negotiating as a Group in the UNFCCC process since 2001 to ensure their priorities are reflected in final negotiation outcomes.
4. Negotiating as part of a Group empowers individual LDC Parties with a stronger voice through collective efforts and ensures equitable outcomes from the UNFCCC process.
5. LDCs need to continue providing progressive leadership, inspire domestic climate action and formalize governance mechanism as a Group towards implementation of enhanced climate action in the post 2020 period.

Guiding principles for the LDC Group

6. Transparency, equity and inclusiveness are guiding principles of the LDC Group, which ensures equal opportunities for all members of the Group and reflect the Group’s diversity.

Mission and Goals

7. The overall mission of the Group is to ensure that outcomes of UN climate change negotiations reflect LDC interests and priorities. The global decision-making processes on climate change should be inclusive, equitable and effective, if such outcomes are to be achieved.
8. The Group endeavours to align with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, increasing its ability to adapt and foster climate change resilience, and making financial flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emissions pathways.
9. Short- and medium-term goals to achieve this mission include:
 - I. Strengthen the Group's understanding of substantive, scientific, political and legal issues in the UNFCCC process;
 - II. Strengthen and sustain the capacity of the Group to participate in and influence the UNFCCC and related processes;
 - III. Strengthen alliances, networks and communication within and outside the UNFCCC negotiations;
 - IV. Support LDCs' implementation of Paris Agreement commitments at the national level.
 - V. Support implementation of LDC initiatives

Membership

10. The Least Developed Countries is a special category developed by the UN; there are currently 47 countries on the list of LDCs which is reviewed every three years by the Committee for Development (CDP), a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council. These 47 countries negotiate as a bloc under the UNFCCC related meetings.
11. All LDCs aspire to graduate from the LDC to developing country status. About 10 countries are on the horizon to graduate in next 10 years. The current 47 LDC group of countries is a progressive bloc and made significant contribution to international climate discourse under the UNFCCC framework.
12. Should a country graduate from LDC status that country may be accorded an observer status at the LDC meeting to ensure continuity and institutional memory. LDC Alumni may consider cooperating to continue progressive climate actions to align with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement of limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, increasing its ability to adapt and foster climate change resilience and making financial flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emissions pathways, and LDC Initiatives.

Governance

LDC Ministerial Meeting

13. The LDC Ministerial meeting is the highest forum for decision making on all matters related to climate change issues for LDC Group.
14. The Ministers or their representatives from UN recognized LDC Governments, preferably from Ministries and or agencies related to Environment or Climate Change, will represent at the LDC Ministerial meetings.
15. The LDC Ministers will meet once a year, unless otherwise decided, at the location proposed by the LDC Chair country.
16. The decisions at the LDC Ministerial will be taken as far as possible through consensus. In the event consensus is not possible, decision will be taken by two third majority through voting.
17. The Minister from the Chairing country will serve as the Chair at the LDC Ministerial meeting. He/she will also represent the LDC Group at the high-level political forum, including at national, regional and international level with the view to advocate for Group's interest.
18. The LDC Ministerial meeting will also be attended by the thematic coordinators, experts and advisers along with any staff that the ministers chose to attend. However, they will not be entitled to take decisions unless they have been expressly authorised in writing by their respective Minister.

LDC Chair

19. The Chair of the LDC Group will be selected as per the provision of the "LDC Election Guideline"
20. The home country of the LDC Chair shall provide full support to the appointed Chair to fulfil her/his duties and responsibilities. If the country desires to substitute the person chairing the group, it has to be done in accordance with the specific provisions of the Election Guidelines.
21. The Chair shall be responsible for the following:
 - I. Coordination and group management, liaising with UNFCCC National Focal Points as appropriate
 - II. Diplomacy, including representing the Group in forums inside and outside of the UNFCCC
 - III. Strategic thinking and action, including advising and consulting the Group on negotiation strategies, engaging in bigger political opportunities on behalf of the Group, and engaging with potential alliances to advance LDC positions
 - IV. Policy shaping, including leading and working with the Group to agree on the LDC strategic priorities and key messages
 - V. Advocacy, including engaging in communication, media and outreach activities

- VI. Capacity strengthening, including articulating LDC needs and priorities for individual and institutional support and championing gender equality in LDC delegations
 - VII. Steering LDC-led initiatives and guiding LDC-related initiatives to support climate action at the national level
 - VIII. Fundraising, to ensure that there is sufficient funding to support the work of the Chair, the Group, the Group's initiatives, etc.
 - IX. Overall functioning of LDC Secretariat, including preparation of a multi year work plan
 - X. Chair the Governing board of LDC Initiatives
22. The LDC Chair is expected to represent LDC voices and interests by consensus and defend agreed-upon positions in all aspects of the negotiations. The Chair needs to have an overview of what is happening on all issues under negotiation (even though she/he can rely on coordinators and technical support teams to expand on the details of LDC positions). If consensus is not reached, there shall not be any group position and countries are expected to deal with the issues separately. The LDC Chair has a clear technical role within the UNFCCC process, as well as a political role as a spokesperson for LDCs outside of the negotiations. The LDC Chair (as the chairing person) shall endeavour to ensure that she/he represents the views of the LDC Group.
23. During high-level events, it is possible that the 'LDC Chair' is represented by another (usually more senior) person representing the government of the home country of the LDC Chair – e.g. a Minister. This is a largely political role, and the LDC Chair will provide technical support to her/his Minister accordingly.
24. Representatives from the home country of LDC Chair must clarify in their interventions, activities etc. whether the country does so in a national capacity or on behalf of the LDC Group.

LDC UNFCCC National Focal Points

25. The LDC Group is the collective responsibility of the LDC member countries, represented by the UNFCCC national focal points of the respective member countries. Therefore, the NFPs should provide full possible support to the LDC Chair and the Group.
26. The National Focal Points shall endeavour to meet once a year at the timing and the location of Chair's choosing. The focal points meeting will discuss strategic and technical issues related to the overall engagement and functioning of the Group.
27. The focal points shall nominate the member of LDC Election Committee as per the para 31

LDC Elders

28. The LDC Elders group is hereby established to assist the LDC Chair and the LDC Group with a view to improve decision making process at the technical level. The Elders will execute the following functions:

- I. Provide vital support to the LDC Chair as a source of institutional memory
 - II. Advise the LDC Chair on the strategic issues and engagement with the partner
 - III. Ensure continuity in LDCs' engagement in the negotiation process
 - IV. Constitute the members of LDC election committee as per its guidelines
29. The members to the LDC Elders Group will be comprised of individuals among the LDC Group, who have stature and credibility in the international process, including: former LDC Chairs or other notable personalities who have contributed for advancing the LDC cause in the international area. The LDC Chair shall select the member of the LDC Elders Group.
30. The LDC Chair will chair the LDC Elders Group.
31. The LDC Elders shall endeavour to meet once every three months at a time and location of the choosing of LDC Chair. The minimum quorum of two thirds will apply for any LDC Elders Group meeting.

LDC Election Committee

32. The LDC Election Committee is hereby established to ensure transparent decision making in the election matters. The committee will execute following functions:
- I. Recommend a candidature for the incoming LDC Chair (while respecting rotational rules as stated above).
 - II. Decide on the nomination of the LDC representative to various positions in UNFCCC constituted bodies and others, in accordance with the Election Guidelines. The LDC Guideline should attend to recognise regional balance in the nomination of candidates for various positions.

Thematic Coordinators/co-coordinators

33. Thematic Coordinators/co-coordinators form the bedrock of the LDC engagement in the UNFCCC negotiation process. Accordingly, they shall endeavour to perform the following functions:
- I. Develop positions, assess other groups' positions, lead thematic teams and speak on behalf of the LDC Group when authorised by the LDC Chair to do so;
 - II. Accompany the LDC Chair to meetings with other Parties and represent the Group whenever necessary and requested by the LDC Chair
 - III. Coordinate the process for UNFCCC submissions and provide inputs as requested
 - IV. Prepare thematic progress reports to support the knowledge management of the Group.

Secretariat

34. The permanent Secretariat of the LDC Group on Climate Change is hereby established. The purpose of the Secretariat is to provide day to day

management and organization of work of the LDC Chair to serve the LDC Group.

Advisors and technical support

35. The LDC Chair of the Group, in consultation with the LDC elders and LDC National Focal Points, may engage with partner organization(s) for advisory and technical support. Such engagement shall be organized through mutually agreed memoranda of understandings.

LDC Initiatives

36. The LDC Group launched its *LDC vision 2050: towards a climate-resilient future* at the UN Secretary General's United Nation Climate Action Summit (UNCAS) on 23 September 2019 as part of its efforts to support LDC engagement in the UNFCCC process and climate action by LDC members.-
37. Delivery of this vision is being supported by three LDC led and driven initiatives:
- i. The LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC)
 - ii. The LDC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative for Sustainable Development (LDC REEEI) and;
 - iii. The Least Developed Countries (LDC) Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR).
38. The Group, through the chair, shall establish governance framework for all initiatives, so as to synergize the actions across all initiatives and maximizing the benefit to the Group.
39. Each of these initiatives will be led by the technical lead to be nominated as per the election guideline
40. Implementation of any activities, including the resource mobilization should be carried out with guidance of the LDC chair

Amendments

41. Amendments to the Charter shall come into force for all Members of the LDC Group when they have been adopted by consensus at the next LDC Ministerial Meeting.

Budget and Resources

42. The LDC Chair shall seek budgetary support for the work of the LDC Group from a variety of sources.

Formalities and Signatures

The present Charter will be opened for signature three months after the approval by the next LDC Ministerial meeting. Ministers, or their authorised representatives shall endeavour to reach a consensus in support of the Charter. If this is not possible, a simple majority of Ministers, or authorised representatives shall give approval to the Charter for it to enter into existence.

The following Ministers, or authorised representatives, of the Governments of the LDC Group have signed the Charter at the city of [place] on [date]