LDCs’ development progress has slowed due to COVID, as many countries have been forced to increase borrowing for recovery, thereby diverting funding away from planned development activities. This has ultimately increased public debt, strained limited public resources, and either slowed – or in some cases rolled back - progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

With the challenges LDCs face today, effective development co-operation and how we partner to achieve the SDGs is more critical than ever. The effects of the pandemic coupled with the time left to achieve the SDGs necessitates a unique opportunity to make development co-operation to LDCs more effective by ensuring it is country owned, focused on results, involves inclusive partnerships and is mutually accountable and transparent (the four effectiveness principles).

The 2021 State of LDCs report notes that effective partnerships can be critical to LDCs to catalyze development co-operation, especially during the pandemic. The report emphasizes that working with partners on “national development co-operation policies and strengthened country capacities can enhance the mobilization and effective management of development co-operation”. With ODA to LDCs increasing only slightly in the last year (1.8 percent in real terms compared to 2019), countries require more effective management of limited resources and the effective mobilization of domestic and private sector resources in order to drive development and combat the impeding debt crisis.

The COVID pandemic has also demonstrated the need for a shift in development co-operation practice, from short-term solutions to more long-term, predictable, sustainable development planning. Only a third of LDCs have timely, regular and accurate data and information to effectively manage resources and devise risk-informed policies and programmes. To this end, there is need for LDCs and partners to invest in the national statistical and M&E systems, and for development co-operation partners such as donors and multilateral development banks to align their resources to LDC country priorities and increase the use of country government data and statistics for monitoring the results of their development co-operation programmes.

To effectively monitor country progress on the above, the reform of the Global Partnership monitoring exercise – an exercise that almost all LDCs participated in 2019 – is underway to meet the evolving needs of stakeholders and to ensure that it produces evidence that is relevant to the effectiveness challenges that LDCs face today.

As a critical event in the lead up to the Global Partnership ’2022 Effectiveness Summit’ in December 2022, LDC5 and its new programme of action provides an opportunity for countries to recommit to the effectiveness principles, renewing a call for more effective partnerships at the country level that engage different forms of international development co-operation to help LDCs build back better and ensure that LDC graduation is possible, sustainable, and irreversible.