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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Organisation internationale pour les pays les moins avancés (OIPMA), a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 May 2021]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The role of international cooperation in eliminating the constraints and obstacles to sustainable development in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

The urgent need foster international cooperation to address the spread of terrorisms and the use of mercenaries in the African LDCs:

In recent years, some countries on the African continent have found themselves as victims of terrorist groups, particularly in the Sahel-Sahara region, where a large number of extremist influx and jihadist groups has doubled. Recently, the attacks have jumped by 300%. Al-Qaeda has more fighters than ever before in Africa, and new jihadist groups have emerged in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and the Niger. Da'esh and other extremists organizations in the region have expanded their operations into the heart of Africa, to include six countries in the Sahel region, including Chad, Cameroon, the Niger and Nigeria, as well as in northern Mali and Burkina Faso. In the broader Sahel region, terrorist groups have expanded their operations in north and central Mali and the Tri-Border Region of Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger. These include affiliates of Al-Qaeda and Da'esh as well as non-aligned groups. As a result, the number of violent attacks in the Western Sahel region increased by 250 percent since 2018. These groups are expanding their movement to include east-west corridors of mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters through Libya. Early observers predicted that Daesh would operate a new stage of its operations in the Lake Chad region because of its proximity to Libya, where funds flow from Tripoli's militias, and mercenaries. Furthermore, some of the arms sent into Libya during the uprising in 2011 were later used by militants with ties to Al-Qaeda in Mali.

In this context, IOLDCs expresses its continuing concern at the increasing flow of foreign terrorist fighters and at the threat it poses to States, especially the LDCs. IOLDCs encourages all States to address this threat by enhancing their cooperation and developing relevant measures to prevent this phenomenon.

The spread of terrorism and the transfer of mercenaries and terrorists fighters represent indeed a particular threat for the LDCs, which requires an urgent and strong collective action from the international community. Currently, the presence of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram has expanded significantly in many of African least developed countries (LDCs), namely Chad, the Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso. IOLDCs points out the threat of a new force of foreign mercenaries containing extremist elements, like those that previously destabilized Afghanistan and the Iraq, which rises a long-term issue for the region and the world.

As acknowledged by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, the lack of support of the international community is clear today in the Sahel and Lake Chad. "In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the increasing number and complexity of terrorist attacks on both civilian and military targets demonstrate the need for a more robust and integrated response with a focus on cross-border issues."

In this context, IOLDCs recalls the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, as recognized in Resolution 2368 of the Security Council.

IOLDCs also supports the call of the Sahel Countries to intensify the fight against terrorist groups on all fronts, calling for continued implementation of the Road Map and the Joint Force Action Plan in the Sahel.

In particular, the IOLDCs reaffirms the increasing need peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operation implemented by the African Union and supported by the United Nations.

The consequences of the spread of terrorisms for human rights and development in the LDCs;

Furthermore, according to the United Nations' declaration on the right of people to peace, life without war serves as the primary international prerequisite for the material well-being,

development and progress of countries, and for the full implementation of the rights and fundamental human freedoms proclaimed by the United Nations.

On the one hand, as recognized by the United Nations, terrorism has a very real and direct impact on human rights. In particular, it has devastating consequences for the enjoyment of the right to life, liberty and physical integrity of the affected population. In addition terrorism can destabilize Governments, undermine civil society, jeopardize peace and security, and threaten social and economic development. All of these also have an grave impact on the enjoyment of human rights. Terrorism has also links with transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering, as well as illegal transfers and trafficking of weapons, including nuclear, chemical and biological materials. Consequently, it is linked the commission of serious crimes such as murder, extortion, kidnapping, assault, hostage-taking and robbery.

As a result, IOLDCs affirms the urgent need to address terrorism in the LDCs in order to protect human rights, improve security and stability, and reduce violence in the Least Developed Countries that are affected by it. IOLDCs further affirms the need to foster international cooperation in the field of human rights, in particular the right to life, the right to physical integrity, and economical and social rights, to address the devastating consequences of terrorism in the LDCs, particularly in the Sahel Region.

On the other hand, terrorism has adverse consequences for the economic and social development of States, including a pernicious impact on relations of cooperation among States, and cooperation for development. It affects the implementation of the sustainable development goals and the right to development of the LDCs.

Therefore, IOLDCs calls the Human Rights Council to further investigate and document how terrorism affects the right to development and economical and social rights in the LDCs, and invites all treaty bodies, special procedure mandate holders within their respective mandates, to pay due attention to the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the LDCs, including their right to peace, right to development, and the enjoyment of social economic and cultural rights.

IOLDCs also recommends the Human Right Council to recognize that the effect of conflict, violence and terrorism represents a major constraint against the protection of Human Rights the LDCs and their right to development.

The need to intensify international cooperation in the field of human rights and development in the LDCs to prevent terrorism:

While fostering international cooperation in the field of human rights is essential to address the threat posed by terrorism, mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters, it is also key to tackled the underlying conditions that leads to the spread of terrorism.

As recognized by the Human Rights Council, counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are complementary and mutually reinforcing, and must be pursued together.

IOLDCs also strongly believes that only a comprehensive approach can address the root causes of conflict and terrorism in the LDCs, which includes promoting political and religious tolerance, achieving economic development and social harmony, and resolving and preventing armed conflicts.

As a result, IOLDCs affirms the need to foster international cooperation in the field of human rights to reduce inequality, foster sustainable development and promote economic, social and cultural rights in the LDCs as a mean of preventing the spread of terrorism and establishing peace and stability in the LDCs.

In this regards, IOLDCs reminds that the Human Rights Council recognized unwavering commitment to strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, in accordance with the principles of international law, including through technical cooperation and capacity building.

Finally, the LDCs have been particularly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated their economic and social vulnerability, as well as inequalities. In this context,

IOLDCs raises the attention of the Human Rights Council about the urgent need to provide support to the LDCs in overcoming the challenges of the pandemic as a mean of preventing the spread of extremism and terrorism in these countries.
