

**Submission by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)
On the evolving needs of the least developed countries in the context of the upcoming
midway point before the review of the mandate of the Least Developed Countries Expert
Group (LEG) (Decision 15/COP 30, para. 17)**

Focus: Views on the evolving needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the context of the midway point before the review of the mandate of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)

1. Introduction

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) welcomes the opportunity to provide views on the work of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) under its current mandate. This submission is made in the context of the 2026 midway stocktake before the review of the LEG's mandate. The COP decided in 2021 to extend the mandate of the LEG under its current terms of reference, to undertake a stocktake of its work in 2026 as the midway point, and to review the mandate formally in 2031. COP 30 then invited Parties and relevant organizations to submit views by 31 March 2026 for that purpose.

2. Background

Across each of the LEG's four principal workstreams — documenting gaps and needs, supporting NAP formulation and implementation, expanding metrics for assessing adaptation progress, and aligning NAPs with other Paris Agreement instruments — Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (DRI) is already implicitly present as a subject of concern, but is not yet treated as a priority or given systematic operational attention.

CDRI submits that **disaster resilient infrastructure should become a prominent operational priority in the future work of the LEG, and the midway stocktake is the right moment to do so**. For Least Developed Countries (LDCs), infrastructure is no longer a peripheral adaptation issue. It is a foundational condition for adaptation, livelihoods protection, service continuity, economic recovery, and sustainable development. Where roads fail, communities lose access to markets, schools, clinics, and emergency response. Where power, water, communications, and health facilities fail, adaptation gains across sectors are reversed. CDRI's Action Agenda on Integrating Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in National Adaptation Strategies¹, which was launched at COP30, argues that resilient infrastructure is not an add-on to adaptation, but one of its principal delivery systems.

3. Why DRI Should be a Priority of the LEG's Future Work

Climate risks are rising. While major infrastructure expansion still lays ahead for most LDCs, it makes the need for DRI especially acute. Climate-related disasters have caused **over US\$ 3 trillion** in direct losses globally over the last two decades. Infrastructure disruption in low- and middle-income countries is already estimated at **1–2% of GDP annually**, and without significant adaptation action, that figure could double by 2030. CDRI's Global Infrastructure

¹ CDRI. (2025). Action Agenda on Integrating DRI in National Adaptation Strategies.
<https://cdri.world/action-agenda/>

Resilience (GIR) Report 2025 notes that the economic costs associated with climate-related infrastructure failures are on average **7.4 times** the direct damages to infrastructure assets. Global average annual losses related to buildings and infrastructure exceed **US\$ 700 billion**. For countries with a low infrastructure asset base, such as LDCs, these disaster-induced infrastructure losses can debilitate communities for extended periods, reversing hard won adaptation gains.

The LEG should therefore treat the infrastructure resilience gap as a first-order evidentiary and guidance priority: documenting it systematically in its work on LDC adaptation gaps; embedding resilient design and finance criteria in its NAP support; and ensuring that the annual global infrastructure losses—concentrated most devastatingly in countries with the least fiscal capacity to recover—are visible in the metrics and finance access work it takes forward.

Adaptation Gap and LDC Infrastructure

The economic case for investing in disaster resilient infrastructure is equally strong. CDRI's research finds that **75 percent of infrastructure needed by 2050 is yet to be built²**, with the largest share of this investment expected in the Global South. While incorporating resilience in infrastructure may add **5–15 percent** to upfront costs, they can deliver returns worth **7–12 times** the initial investment over the asset life cycle². As of mid-September 2025, **68 countries** had submitted NAPs, and **nearly half** of them included references to disaster resilient infrastructure. Yet implementation remains weak, fragmented, and under-financed¹.

Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) conclusions adopted in Belém recognized that LDCs still face major implementation constraints: insufficient implementing partners to support NAP implementation; insufficient resources in the Least Developed Countries Fund (LCDF); the absence of Green Climate Fund (GCF) modalities to expedite support for NAP implementation; and the inability to submit integrated programme proposals for NAP implementation, forcing countries to make multiple fragmented project applications. The same conclusions show that, as of November 2025, only **24 of 44 LDCs** had submitted a NAP.

Four Priority Areas for the LEG's Future Work

Against this background, CDRI submits that the LEG should place **more emphasis on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** in the following four areas of its future work.

1. First, the LEG should treat DRI as a **core adaptation priority for LDCs**, not merely as a sectoral subset of transport, energy, water, or urban development. Infrastructure is systemic, and infrastructure interdependence amplifies risk. A single infrastructure failure can cascade across food systems, water access, health services, communications, and local economies. Resilient infrastructure protects development gains, supports long-term fiscal stability, and must be embedded across the full infrastructure lifecycle, from planning and procurement to maintenance and reconstruction.

² CDRI. (2025). Global Infrastructure Resilience Report. <https://cdri.world/global-infrastructure-resilience-report-2025-capturing-the-resilience-dividend-2/>

2. Second, the LEG should strengthen its technical guidance to **support incorporation of disaster resilient infrastructure in NAP formulation and implementation in LDCs**. This should include guidance for multi-hazard and multi-sector risk assessments; identification of adaptation-critical assets; integration of hazard diagnostics in project design; service continuity planning; retrofitting of vulnerable assets; resilient design standards; and stronger monitoring of infrastructure loss, damage, and downtime. CDRI continues to identify, develop and refine practical tools for governments, such as risk and resilience scorecards, resilient infrastructure design standards, disaster and climate budget tagging, participatory risk assessment frameworks, insurance and finance toolkits, and national taxonomies for adaptation and resilience investments.
3. Third, the LEG should give more attention to the **climate finance dimension of resilient infrastructure in LDCs**. Adaptation finance remains far below need. International public adaptation finance flows were only US\$ 26 billion in 2023, while UNEP's 2025 Adaptation Gap Report³ estimates adaptation finance needs in developing countries at **US\$ 365 billion**. UNEP concludes that adaptation finance needs are **12–14 times** the currently available finance. For LDCs, this finance gap directly constrains the ability to climate-proof roads, bridges, irrigation systems, hospitals, schools, water systems, ports, and energy networks that underpin livelihoods and development. CDRI recommends that the LEG more actively encourage climate finance institutions and implementing entities to **prioritize disaster resilient infrastructure in their LDC portfolios**. Resilient infrastructure is one of the few adaptation investments that simultaneously protects people, reduces fiscal losses, and enables sustainable growth. The GIR Report 2025² emphasizes layered financing approaches, combining public budgets, contingency funds, credit lines, insurance, and risk-pooling mechanisms.
4. Fourth, the LEG should engage more directly with **Just Transition in the context of LDC adaptation and infrastructure development**. Under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme, Parties recognized that just transition pathways are relevant not only to mitigation but also to adaptation, climate resilience, and adaptive capacity, and highlighted the importance of means of implementation for developing countries, especially LDCs. The same decision text recognizes that the widening adaptation finance gap may hinder implementation of just transition pathways in vulnerable developing countries.

6. LEG and Just Transition Work

For LDCs, a just transition cannot be reduced to workforce transition in high-emitting sectors. Instead, it must also mean **building critical infrastructure that is designed to be resilient, equitable, and inclusive from the outset before vulnerability is locked in**. This is potential work that LEG should place more effort into—to ensure that LDCs are prepared for the future. Embedding disaster resilient infrastructure into LEG's mandate would directly address the implementation gap that the 2025 SBI conclusions identified.

³ UNEP. (2025). Adaptation Gap Report. <https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2025>

Since much of the infrastructure that will shape LDC economies by 2050 is still to be built, LDCs have a historic opportunity to avoid maladaptation⁴ and include equitable access to resilient infrastructure, local jobs and skills in resilient construction and maintenance, resilient public services, participation of affected communities, and protection of poor and vulnerable populations from the social costs of infrastructure failure. CDRI developed these arguments in full in its February 2026 submission to the UAE Just Transition Work Programme⁵.

7. Capacity, Data, and Institutional Systems

There is also a strong capacity rationale for this shift. The GIR Report 2025² shows that monitoring and information systems remain weak in the regions where many LDCs are concentrated. The Global Infrastructure Resilience Survey (2025), conducted as part of the development of the GIR Report revealed that only **16 percent** of respondents reported systematic use of nationwide standardized systems to measure disaster-related infrastructure damage, while **31 percent** relied on international methodologies only for large disasters. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa showed the lowest systematic use, at roughly **10–15 percent**. Infrastructure asset registers were even weaker: only **15 percent** of respondents globally reported nationwide, up-to-date registries used consistently, with **8 percent** in South Asia and **17 percent** in sub-Saharan Africa. GIR 2025 also notes that internet penetration in LDCs is only **36 percent**, compared with roughly two-thirds globally, limiting digital resilience solutions unless capacity and inclusion gaps are addressed.

These statistics suggest that the evolving needs of LDCs are about **practical implementation support**: data systems, institutional coordination, engineering standards, finance access, project preparation, and locally grounded implementation pathways. The current LEG work programme already includes documenting gaps and needs, supporting access to funding for NAP implementation, expanding metrics for assessing progress, and assisting LDCs in aligning NAPs with other relevant instruments under the Convention and Paris Agreement. DRI should be embedded more deliberately across those workstreams.

8. Recommendations

CDRI, therefore, recommends that, at the midway stocktake, Parties consider requesting the LEG to:

1. **Treat disaster resilient infrastructure as a priority area of support for LDCs** under its future work on NAP formulation, implementation, review, and updating.
2. Revise its technical guidance documents on NAP formulation to include a dedicated DRI module.

⁴ UNCTAD. (2024). Digital Economy Report. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/der2024_en.pdf

⁵ CDRI's **Submission to the UNFCCC under the UAE Just Transition Programme**

(Decision 3/CMA.5, para. 6). Available at:

<https://submissions.unfccc.int/api/files/download?serverRelativeFilePath=/submissions/Archive/202602061500--->

CDRI%20Submission%20to%20UNFCCC%20on%20Just%20Transition%20Work%20Programme%2027.01.2026.%20FINAL.docx

3. **Integrate disaster resilient infrastructure most prominently into technical guidance and training**, including risk assessment, resilient standards, retrofitting, service continuity, infrastructure monitoring, and resilient recovery.
4. **Strengthen work on access to finance for disaster resilient infrastructure in LDCs**, including collaboration with the GCF, LDCF, AF, MDBs, and accredited entities to support programmatic and pipeline-based approaches. The LEG should consider convening a technical workshop with CDRI, GCF, and MDBs on financing resilient infrastructure in LDC NAP pipelines.
5. **Address just transitions in LDCs through a resilience-building lens**, recognizing that building resilient critical infrastructure is central to fair, inclusive, and climate-resilient development pathways.
6. **Support improved data, metrics, and institutional systems** for infrastructure damage tracking, asset registers, and infrastructure-related adaptation indicators in LDCs. This should include identifying infrastructure-specific indicators for its expanded adaptation metrics framework.

9. Conclusion

CDRI submits that the evolving needs of LDCs now require the LEG to move beyond adaptation planning in a narrow sense and to engage more directly with the systems that determine whether adaptation succeeds in practice. Disaster Resilient Infrastructure is one of those systems. It protects livelihoods, secures essential services, reduces fiscal shocks, supports just transitions, and creates the foundation for sustainable development in an era of intensifying climate risk. For LDCs, it should be recognized as a strategic priority of the LEG's future work.

Request to Parties to the UNFCCC and the UNFCCC Secretariat

CDRI wishes to confirm its availability to provide its technical expertise that would support the work of LEG as it relates to Climate- and Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Submitted by: Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

CDRI is a global coalition dedicated to enhancing the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks. With 65 Members, it includes national governments, international organizations, academia, and the private sector collaborating to share knowledge, conduct research, and invest in Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

To learn more about CDRI visit <https://cdri.world/>

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