**Dialogue on a UN Online University for Least‑Developed Countries – Final Expert Session**  
*4 June 2025, 4:30 AM – 5:30 PM · UN HQ (hybrid)*

**Summary of the Session**

The High‑Level Expert Group concluded two days of consultations by confirming the **technical and financial feasibility** of a UN Online University (UNOU) dedicated to LDCs. Discussions coalesced around six pillars:

1. Inclusive governance under an existing UN umbrella.  
2. A diversified, sustainable financing mix (learner fees, pooled funds, philanthropy, private‑sector partnerships).  
3. Robust connectivity and technology solutions, including offline learning centres.  
4. Micro‑credentials that ladder into globally recognised degrees.  
5. Strong labor‑market alignment through virtual internships and employer partnerships.  
6. A commitment to gender equity, multilingual delivery and last‑mile access.

High‑level statements from LDCs, LLDCs, the Africa Group, Qatar, and Türkiye stressed predictable funding, rapid deployment, and synergy with the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA). The Under‑Secretary‑General (OHRLLS) confirmed that the recommendations will feed directly into the Secretary‑General’s feasibility report for the 88th UN General Assembly.

**Key Interventions**

* **Chair (OHRLLS)** opened the session, framed objectives, and reiterated the DPoA mandate to explore a digital university for LDCs.
* **Prof. W. Camera (Ethiopia)** highlighted the LDC tertiary‑enrolment rate versus the global average, endorsed a partner‑university model as the fastest, least‑cost option, and positioned UNOU as a “quality broker” for best practice.
* **Dr. Maria Marini (South Africa)** laid out an inclusive governance structure, a “pay‑as‑you‑progress” fee model backed by scholarships, and stressed gender‑responsive, AI‑enabled multilingual curricula.
* **AI Rapporteur** synthesized six critical focus areas: leadership and accreditation; technology mix; infrastructure; credential integrity; employability; and long‑term sustainability.
* **Under‑Secretary‑General (OHRLLS)** identified five imperatives: expand STEM access, close the digital gap, ensure quality faculty and content, secure financing, and guarantee degree recognition, and confirmed the study will reach the 88th UNGA.
* **Group of LDCs (DIPA Chair)** called the initiative a moral imperative and warned of lost demographic dividends if delayed.
* **Türkiye**  urged alignment with July’s Fourth Conference on Financing for Development and cooperation with the UN Technology Bank.
* **Qatar** pledged support, framing UNOU as an investment in more than a billion young people.
* **Africa Group (Ethiopia)** endorsed strengthened digital alignment and asked for predictable, stable financing.

**Interactive Dialogue**

Delegates focused on virtual internships, localization, multilingual delivery, and cost barriers; experts described simulation‑based internships, AI translation tools, and the use of regional hubs for contextualization. **Professor James Agajo (Nigeria**) presented the ITU “sandbox” and hos this practical virtual laboratory where students can record, experiment, and publish engineering projects online, eliminating physical barriers for learners.

**Secretariat Response and Next Steps**

The Deputy Chair thanked experts and Member States for their “rigorous and practical” guidance, confirmed the timeline below, and committed to transparent, regular briefings.

**Immediate deliverables**

* Finalise feasibility study text for inclusion in the Secretary‑General’s report to the 88th UNGA by **July 2025**.
* Circulate a detailed governance charter, costed work‑plan, and proposed financing mechanism by **August 2025**.
* UNESCO and UNEVOC to compile an open, multilingual repository of STEM learning resources by **August 2025**.
* ITU and the UN Technology Bank to present a connectivity and telecom‑partnership blueprint by **September 2025**.
* Member States and philanthropic partners to begin pledging start‑up resources for a Q2 2026 pilot launch.

**Closing**  
The Chair urged participants “to move from vision to action,” stressing that a credible, inclusive UN‑led digital university is essential to honoring the pledge to leave no one behind.