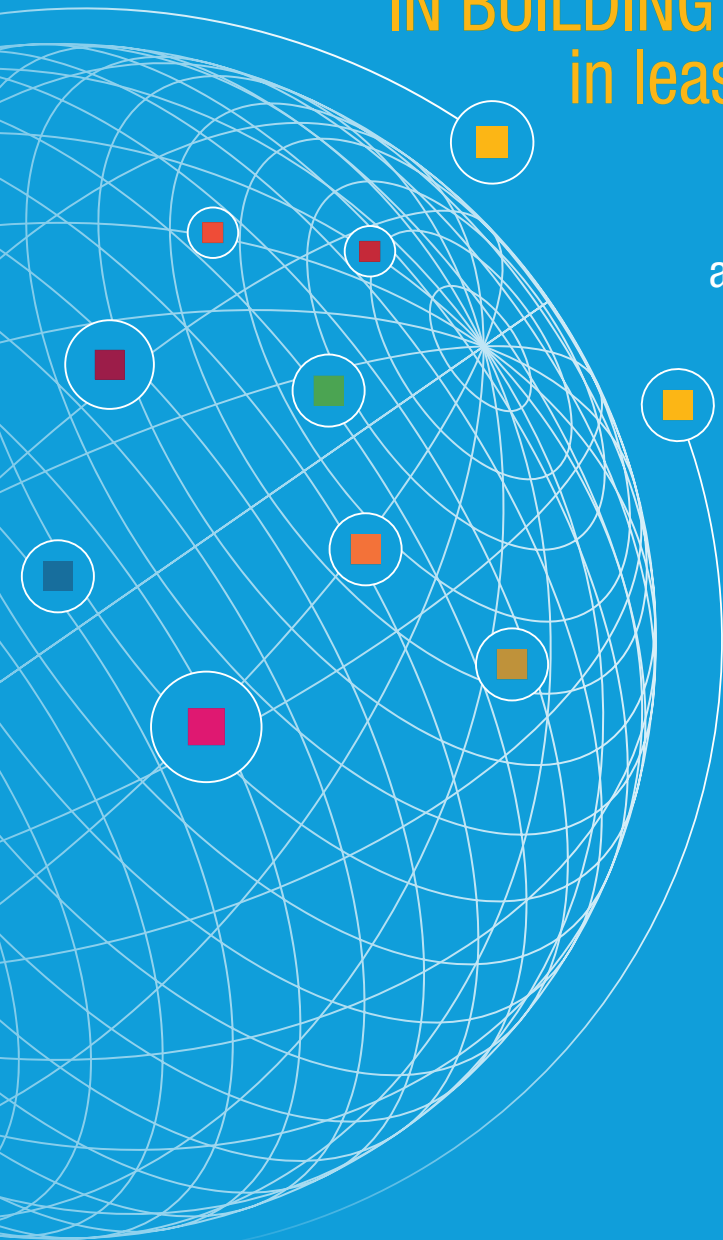


UNCTAD WORK IN BUILDING RESILIENCE in least developed countries

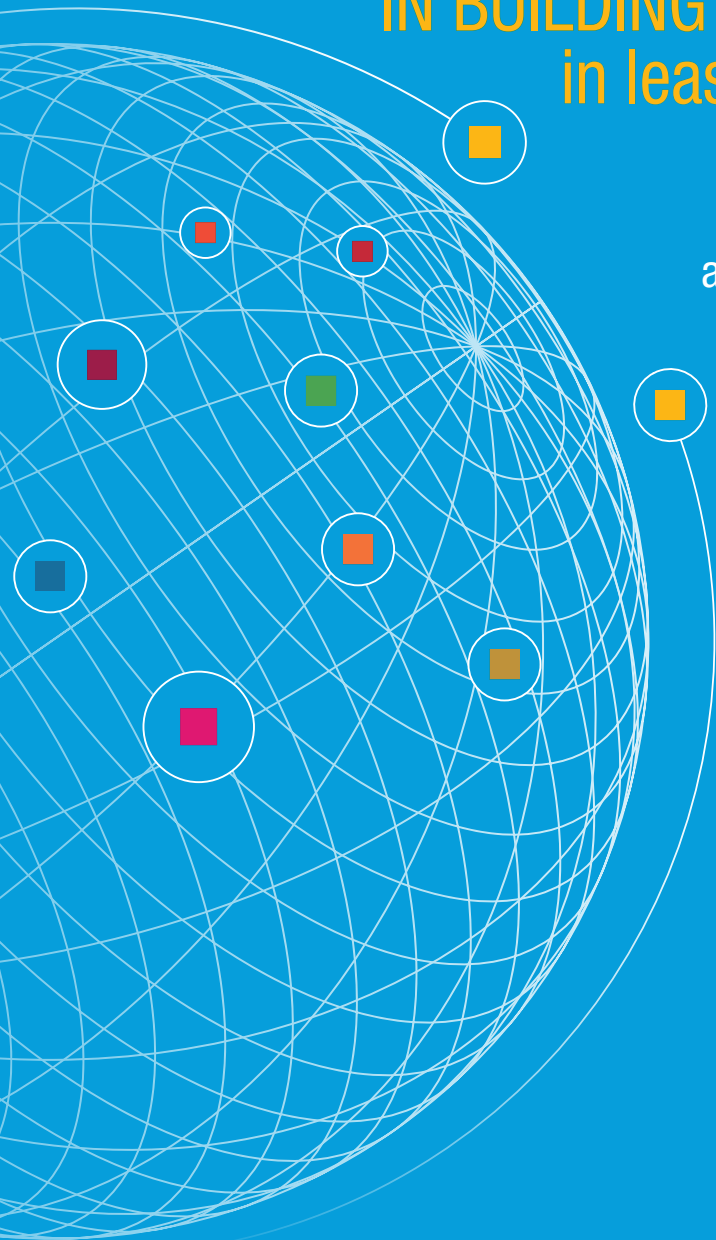
From inequality
and vulnerability to
prosperity for all



UNITED NATIONS
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UNCTAD WORK IN BUILDING RESILIENCE in least developed countries

From inequality
and vulnerability to
prosperity for all



UNITED NATIONS
UNCTAD

Geneva, 2023

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UNCTAD/TC/MISC/2023/1

Over the last 50 years most least developed countries (LDCs) have struggled to overcome the development challenges that led to the establishment of the category in 1971. Even their strong economic growth since the mid-1990s has generally been insufficient to redress their long-term income divergence with the rest of the world. The COVID-19 crisis and the emerging two-speed global recovery threaten to reverse many hard-won development gains, which is further aggravated by the creeping adverse effects of climate change.

Mainstreaming productive capacities development in these countries is a necessary condition for boosting their capacity to respond to and recover from crises. While LDCs prioritize economic transformation and diversification in their policies, they have critically lacked the means necessary to progress towards the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The average annual investment requirements to end extreme poverty (SDG 1.1) in LDCs is estimated at \$485 billion, whereas doubling the share of manufacturing in GDP (SDG 9.2) is estimated at \$1,051 billion. The latter amounts to more than triple the current investment by LDCs, and therefore vastly exceeds LDCs' available resources.

The international community has therefore an essential role to play in supporting LDCs in their efforts to mobilize adequate resources for their sustainable development needs, including in financing and technology. A new generation of international support measures that are more closely aligned to the expressed needs of LDCs and 21st century realities will have to be rolled out to support their domestic efforts. Bolstering multilateralism and dealing decisively with external sources of instability affecting LDCs is necessary to create a conducive climate for the achievement of the next programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2022-2031.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and amplified the vulnerability of least developed countries to external shocks. Once again, those with the least are suffering the most. At a time fraught with fragilities, *UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report* shines a light on how governments and the international community can pool efforts to build productive capacities as a pathway to sustainable development for all.



António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Extract from [The Least Developed Countries Report 2021](#)

Since advocating for the creation of the category of the least developed countries (LDCs) five decades ago, UNCTAD has been at the forefront of LDC development policy. Today, UNCTAD leads the analysis and search for practical national solutions for LDCs, rallying the international community to provide strengthened and appropriate support at the global level. This report proposes a pivotal agenda for the 2022-2031 decade for LDCs, a crucial time period that is flanked on one end by the COVID-19 pandemic and on the other by the culmination of the 2030 Agenda. Centered on building productive capacities for their programme of action, this report embodies UNCTAD's unique expertise and continued commitment to help LDCs transition to a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future for both their citizens and the global community.



Rebeca Grynspan

Secretary-General of UNCTAD

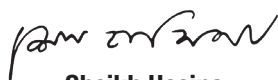
Extract from The Least Developed Countries Report 2021

The UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report 2022, on the theme low-carbon transition and its troubling implications for structural transformation, provides an insight of many aspects of the world's most impoverished countries. I appreciate the report that duly highlighted the climate change, the specific needs of the LDCs, and the much-needed scaling up of international cooperation. The climate change impacts will be the most challenging and long-lasting for LDCs and other vulnerable countries, reinforcing the importance of climate justice.

Bangladesh has made significant strides in terms of its socio-economic gains. However, the gains are at stake owing to the adverse impacts of climate change for which we are not responsible at all. As we continue to pursue our sustainable development objectives in an increasingly complex international milieu, we are confronted with daunting adaptation and mitigation needs that strain or limited domestic resources.

As this report argues, committed climate finance, life-saving technology transfer and a fairer burden-sharing mechanism are all long overdue. It is critical that the UNFCCC process delivers on the LDCs' call for meaningful climate action by developed and emerging economies, and for concrete, time-bound deliverables committed under the Paris Agreement.

I hope, this well-researched report will be duly noted and acted upon by all concerned stakeholders. I thank the UNCTAD Secretary General and her team for this commendable work.



Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of Bangladesh

27 October 2022

WHAT ARE THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES? ¹

As of 2021, forty-six countries are designated by the United Nations as least developed countries (LDCs). These are: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia.

The list of LDCs is reviewed every three years by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a group of independent experts that report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Following a triennial review of the list, the CDP may recommend, in its report to ECOSOC, countries for addition to the list or graduation from LDC status.

Between 2017 and 2020 the CDP undertook a comprehensive review of the LDC criteria. The resulting revised criteria were first applied at the triennial review which took place in February 2021. The criteria and the thresholds for inclusion into the LDC category and for graduation from the category applied at the 2021 triennial review were as follows:

- An income criterion, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita in United States dollars, using conversion factors based on the World Bank Atlas methodology. The threshold for inclusion and graduation is based on the thresholds of the World Bank's low-income category. At the 2021 triennial review, the threshold for inclusion was \$1,018 or below; the threshold for graduation was \$1,222 or above;

¹ Extract from [The least developed countries report 2021](#)

- A human assets index (HAI), consisting of two sub-indices: a health sub-index and an education sub-index. The health sub-index has three indicators: (i) the under-five mortality rate; (ii) the maternal mortality ratio; and (iii) the prevalence of stunting. The education sub-index has three indicators: (i) the gross secondary school enrolment ratio; (ii) the adult literacy rate; and (iii) the gender parity index for gross secondary school enrolment. All six indicators are converted into indices using established methodologies with an equal weight. The 2021 triennial review set the thresholds for inclusion and graduation at 60 or below and 66 or above, respectively.
- An economic and environmental vulnerability index, consisting of two sub-indices: an economic vulnerability sub-index and an environmental vulnerability sub-index. The economic vulnerability sub-index has four indicators: (i) share of agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing in GDP; (ii) remoteness and landlockedness; (iii) merchandise export concentration; and (iv) instability of exports of goods and services. The environmental vulnerability sub-index has four indicators: (i) share of population in low elevated coastal zones; (ii) share of the population living in drylands; (iii) instability of agricultural production; and (iv) victims of disasters. All eight indicators are converted into indices using established methodologies with an equal weight. The 2021 triennial review set the thresholds for inclusion and graduation at 36 or above and 32 or below, respectively.

At each triennial review, all countries in developing regions are reviewed against the criteria. If a non-LDC meets the established inclusion thresholds for all three criteria in a single review, it can become eligible for inclusion. Inclusion requires the consent of the country concerned and becomes effective immediately after the General Assembly takes note of the Committee's recommendation. No recommendations were made for inclusion at the CDP's 2021 triennial review.

UNCTAD'S WORK IN BUILDING RESILIENCE IN LDCS'

From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all

- LDCs represent 14% of the world population, they comprise more than 50% of the world's extremely poor (i.e., those living on less than \$1.9 a day), GDP per capita for the LDC group represented less than 10% of the world average in 2022. Due to a combination of pre-existing factors and the war in Ukraine, LDC populations have experienced a sharp decline in living standards and increasing inequality, while the countries' current account balances have come under additional pressure from rising external debt payments and soaring international energy and food prices. LDCs account for a mere 0.12% of global trade in goods. Furthermore, although LDCs bear the least historical responsibility for climate change, they are on the front lines of the climate crisis. Over the last 50 years, 69 per cent of worldwide deaths caused by climate-related disasters occurred in LDCs.
- To be able to converge with more advanced countries, LDCs must achieve deep-rooted economic progress, or structural economic transformation. Structural transformation is the most desirable avenue for achieving durable poverty reduction (thereby meeting several of the Sustainable Development Goals), as well as progress towards graduation from LDC status, the ultimate UN objective for LDCs as contemplated by the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs and reaffirmed in the 2022 Doha Programme of Action for the LDCs.
- Structural transformation implies enriching the structure of the economy, moving from lower to higher productivity activities, and a wider spectrum of sectors with greater value addition. This requires a range of productive capacity-building policies, notably in the key areas of investment, trade, and innovation capacities. *From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all* (economically) and building a strong set of domestic productive capacities is the crux of most Least Developed Countries' development agenda.

- UNCTAD is well prepared to accompany LDCs on the road to structural transformation. Through its wide range of technical assistance, UNCTAD helps these countries in their transformational agenda. It does so for LDCs that already meet graduation criteria, by helping them secure a smooth transition to post-LDC status, a process UNCTAD has called “graduation with momentum” It begins well before the achievement of the graduation milestone, and carries forward, as countries transition to post-graduation life. It gives special consideration to recently graduated LDCs, as the latter consider the change of status as a new accomplishment on their trajectory of progress, not as an end in itself. For LDCs with a remaining long road to graduation, UNCTAD not only strives to offer the best possible range of advisory services, but also works closely with other key development partners of LDCs, particularly those with a known agenda of support to productive capacity-building.
- In 2022 (provisional), UNCTAD technical cooperation expenditures in support of LDCs amounted to just over US\$11.2 million, an increase of 7 per cent over 2021. Fifty-five country-level projects were implemented in LDCs. LDCs have also benefited much from regional and inter-regional activities of UNCTAD. The share of LDCs in UNCTAD total technical cooperation was 47.4 per cent an increase of 3.9 per cent.
- The COVID-19 crisis has dramatically highlighted the institutional, economic and social shortcomings of the development path followed by most LDCs. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all countries, the impact on LDCs has been particularly severe because of their reduced resilience and diminished capacity to react to the COVID-19 shock and its aftermath. Also, the pandemic emerged at a time when development progress was already slow and unsatisfactory. Many LDCs risk being left behind as the economies of ODCs and developed countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; they may spend the coming years recovering from it and may eventually achieve little real progress on the Sustainable Development Goals during the 2020s. The present situation is therefore exceptional and requires decisive action by both the international community and LDCs themselves to counter the risks of hysteresis and a lost decade.

A SELECTION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMMES FOR LDCS

Investment Policy Reviews



To assist LDCs in attracting and benefitting from foreign direct investment, UNCTAD conducts Investment Policy Reviews to assess the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for investment specific to each country. The Reviews, which provide concrete policy recommendations, are followed by technical assistance activities to support implementation of the recommendations and improve the prospects for sustainable development.



Services Policy Reviews



UNCTAD Services Policy Reviews help LDCs seize the opportunities offered by a services-driven development strategy. The Reviews systematically analyze the economic, regulatory and institutional frameworks that impact on the services sector of a given country. They also provide policy advice to expand the services sector and create jobs and to identify trade policy options that advance national sectoral development objectives.

Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Reviews



UNCTAD assists LDCs in building national capacities in science, technology and innovation through Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) Reviews. The Reviews include an analysis of the national innovation system and an assessment of the STIPs in place, which are usually complemented by in-depth studies of specific sectors, institutions or problems related to science, technology and innovation that are particularly relevant to the beneficiary country. The recommendations put forward in the Reviews help LDCs to better respond to the challenges of a knowledge-based economy.

E-commerce and the Digital Economy



UNCTAD helps LDCs unlock their potential in e-commerce by building the capacities of policymakers and lawmakers in improving the legal, institutional and policy frameworks necessary to foster the development of e-commerce. Legislative support focuses on revising laws and preparing regional cyberlaw frameworks. UNCTAD also prepares regional comparative studies of e-commerce legislation harmonization and has developed a cyberlaw tracker (unctad.org/cyberlawtracker) - the first online tool that maps cyberlaws globally, focusing on e-transaction, cybercrime, data protection and the protection of consumers online.

Investment Guides



To attract foreign direct investment, LDCs need to provide potential investors with updated investment information including legislation, infrastructure, costs or taxes. UNCTAD Investment Guides (or iGuides since 2013) - a joint product of UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce, help to raise awareness among the global investment community of the opportunities and conditions for investment in LDCs. They also build the capacity of local institutions in investment promotion through training on data research, input and update.

Trade Negotiations and the International Trading System



LDCs are facing particular challenges in accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) including limited analytical capacity and lack of resources. UNCTAD supports LDCs that are acceding to the WTO with tailored technical assistance which will reinforce their capacity in trade-related negotiations. The support includes training on particular WTO agreements, assistance in the preparation of memorandums of foreign trade regime and other key accession documents, and exchange of experiences and lessons learned. For LDCs that have recently acceded, UNCTAD supports them in the implementation of WTO commitments.

Support to Graduation from Least Development Countries Status



In the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022–2031 (Doha Programme of Action), member States postulated the ambitious vision of making graduation sustainable and ensuring post-graduation development momentum and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the programme sets a target to enable 15 additional LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031. UNCTAD supports LDCs efforts to achieve structural progress towards and beyond graduation from LDC status. This involves mapping and measuring structural change in all LDCs, strengthening the capacity of individual LDCs to accelerate structural transformation and approach graduation thresholds, and guiding graduating countries in their pursuit of a smooth transition to post-LDC life (e.g. formulating smooth transition strategies).

National Productive Capacities Gap Assessments (NPCGAs)



Using UNCTAD's Productive Capacities Index (PCI), the National Productive Capacity Gap Assessments equip member States and the international community with the tools to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of productive capacities and assess progress on their development over time. These tools can help LDCs define and implement the strategies needed to accelerate growth, boost resilience, reduce economic and social vulnerabilities and thus achieve graduation with momentum. They can also enable the LDCs and development partners to monitor progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2022-2031.

NPCGAs offer unique insights into the performance of economies based on UNCTAD's PCI and empirical and policy-oriented research. They help identify comparative advantages and binding constraints to economic development, as well as mapping intervention strategies. The novelty and value-added of the NPCGA lies in its consistent and systemic application of the eight categories of the PCI (natural capital, human capital, energy, ICT, transport, institutions, private sector and structural change), key indicators used in the construction of the index and a closer examination of micro, meso and macroeconomic policies, institutional and governance frameworks, as well as challenges and opportunities in each of the countries covered by the NPCGA.

Vulnerability Profiles



UNCTAD produces General Assembly-mandated Vulnerability Profiles for those countries that meet LDC graduation criteria for the first time. They are key to the decision-making process of the UN Committee for Development Policy as to graduate a country out of the LDC category. The Vulnerability Profile reviews the achievements of a country in the structural transformation of its economy, the situation of its trade and regional integration, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national economy, as well as the progress against the LDC criteria. It then takes a more forward-looking view and makes an in-depth analysis of the main challenges that a country will face in its path to graduation and beyond.

'Graduation with momentum' strategies



The development path LDC follows to achieve the eligibility criteria for graduation has important implications for the challenges and vulnerabilities they face after graduation, as well as the means they have at their disposal to address them. Graduating LDCs need a new strategy to enable them to achieve graduation on a sustainable basis, and with an economic and developmental base for continued development, or 'graduation with momentum'. The key feature of this graduation strategy is to bridge the pre- and post-graduation development processes to create sustainable graduation and continuity in the development trajectory beyond graduation.

DMFAS – Debt Management and Financial Analysis System



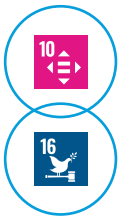
LDCs have lower capacity to build and maintain their debt management systems and debt databases. The DMFAS Programme offers LDCs a set of proven solutions for improving their capacity to handle the day-to-day management of public liabilities and the production of reliable debt data for policymaking. This includes its specialized debt management software, DMFAS, as well as advisory services and training activities in debt management.

Business Facilitation



UNCTAD Business Facilitation Programme helps LDCs improve national business, investment and trade climates by offering a series of efficient tools to simplify procedures and reduce transaction costs. These tools include eRegulations which is an affordable, turn-key solution for Governments to clarify and publicize administrative procedures on the internet; eSimplifications which generally allow Governments to decrease steps and requirements by more than 50%, without changing laws; and eRegistrations, a web-based application conceived to create electronic single windows which allow simultaneous registration with multiple public agencies.

Trade Facilitation



UNCTAD's Trade Facilitation Programme helps LDCs address the technical and institutional challenges resulting from compliance with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation signed in 2013. Specifically, UNCTAD assists LDCs in finalizing national trade facilitation implementation plans, in particular by providing support for the establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, as well as in establishing national and regional trade facilitation coordinating mechanisms.

ASYCUDA – Automated System for Customs Data



The UNCTAD ASYCUDA is an ICT-based customs management system targeted at reforming the national customs clearance processes. It can help LDCs computerize and simplify customs procedures, which will improve the collection of customs revenues and make international markets more accessible to enterprises from LDCs. It further provides the statistical information on foreign trade transactions essential for economic planning. ASYCUDA software is installed at the request of Governments and adapted to suit the national characteristics of individual customs regimes, national tariffs and legislation.

Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development



Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in LDCs make significant contributions to economic growth, employment creation and innovation. However, they face several challenges in enterprise development. Empretec - the UNCTAD Entrepreneurial Development Programme - helps LDCs to foster entrepreneurship capabilities and the growth of internationally competitive SMEs through capacity building activities. The UNCTAD Business Linkage Programme further supports SMEs by transforming linkages between SMEs and transnational corporations into sustainable business relationships.

TrainForTrade



UNCTAD TrainForTrade Programme focuses on building human capacities in LDCs in various areas of international trade and investment through innovative approaches. The pedagogical material developed with UNCTAD experts is based on a blended approach which combines face-to-face training with distance learning. Furthermore, by promoting training of local trainers, TrainForTrade develops local capacities and enhances national ownership.

Measuring and combatting Illicit Financial Flows



Curbing illicit financial flows (IFFs) can help countries, in particular commodity-dependent LDCs, to mobilize capital to finance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national priorities. IFFs appear most prominent in the extractive sector. Furthermore, the lack of internationally comparable data and conceptual clarity as to what constitutes illicit financial flows and how to measure them have been major challenges in designing policies to curb such flows. UNCTAD has developed an innovative statistical methodology to measure, estimate and track IFFs and export under invoicing.

SUPPORT MEASURES AIMED AT EXPORT DIVERSIFICATION IN LDCS

Rules of origin



Least developed countries are granted preferential tariff treatment in the markets of developed and developing countries under several schemes and arrangements. UNCTAD assists Governments in negotiating and drafting Rules of Origin (RoO) under preferential trade agreements as well as non-preferential rules of origin. Our support aims to align the coverage and depth of tariff cuts, rules of origin and administrative procedures of Duty-Free Quota-Free (DFQF) schemes with the productive and institutional capacities of LDCs, with the aim to ensure their full utilization and increase their ability to stimulate the growth of the local enterprise base and international investments, and understand utilization rates of trade preferences including by implementing our GSP Database on Preference Utilization Rates (<https://gsp.unctad.org/home>).

Geographical Indications



Geographical Indications (GIs) are intellectual property tools that producers in LDCs can leverage to harness the potential of local products, and open new pathways for trade and more inclusive development. To be effective, GIs must be incorporated as part of an overall trade promotion strategy. UNCTAD supports LDCs in identifying regions and product pairs to assess the potential of GIs as rural development tools to alleviate poverty. It also raises awareness about GIs among policy makers, advises Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO) delegates on strategies to advocate for GIs in multilateral negotiations, and supports small producers in rural communities through the application of GIs to add value and enhance the export potential of their products.

Holistic support programmes developing LDCs' productive capacities

Inspired by the success of the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II (2017-2023) and responding to multiple requests from various LDCs, UNCTAD has embarked on developing additional Angola-style country programmes for LDCs. The objective of such programmes is to assist LDCs in a sustainable diversification of their economies and exports, and their integration into regional and global value chains. The programmes work towards this objective by building LDC's human resource capacities holistically through training, policy support and knowledge sharing in multiple economic policy areas simultaneously. The priority policy areas to be targeted by the support programmes will be established through Productive Capacities Gap Assessments. For instance, in the case of Angola, seven support areas were identified: (i) Commercial Diplomacy; (ii) Creative Economy; (iii) Empretec Entrepreneurship Training; (iv) Investment Policy Review; (v) National Green Export Review identifying green products with export potential and building them further through technical assistance; (vi) Trade Facilitation; and (vii) Transport and Logistics.



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UNCTAD DELIVERS IMPACT STORIES AND TESTIMONIES FROM BENEFICIARIES

Investment Policy Reviews

- 20 LDCs have completed an Investment Policy Review (IPR)
- The IPR of Togo is in preparation
- Between 2019 and 2020, FDI inflows increased by one per cent in the LDC group as a whole, compared to a rise of six per cent for LDCs that have benefited from an IPR (20 countries) and 14 per cent for those located in Africa.



Djibouti The Government has undertaken important reforms based on the Investment Policy Review (IPR) published in 2013. The implementation of IPR policy recommendations has contributed to improving the country's business environment and operations. At the same time, FDI inflows increased by 36 per cent from an average of \$133 million in the period 2010-2014 to \$240 million in 2020.

ASYCUDA - Automated System for Customs Data



Bangladesh is one of the top garment exporters in the world and this places significant challenges on its National Board of Revenue (NBR) to process all the corresponding trade documentation in a timely fashion. Continued NBR and ASYCUDA cooperation, and installation/configuration of expanded server and storage capacities allowed for addressing the challenges of increasing volume of transactions. In 2019, 2.5 million waybills and 3.8 million declarations were processed by NBR through ASYCUAWorld. On average, NBR processes 50'000+ e-documents per day in ASYCUAWorld. NBR and ASYCUDA contributed to the training and skills development of more than 4'000 Customs officers and economic operators. Merchandise exports/imports total value increased from 74 billion USD in 2015 to 86 billion USD in 2020 and strengthened NBR's revenue collection accordingly. Since 2019, online interaction with other institutions and systems such as IATA and garment associations for the automatic exchange of trade

data with ASYCUDAWorld were implemented. Additional features like the SMS automatic notification of economic operators were deployed to enhance ASYCUDAWorld's e-services and reduce physical interaction.

E-Commerce and the Digital Economy

UNCTAD works with governments to build their capabilities to harness e-commerce and the digital economy for inclusive and sustainable development by conducting national assessments (eTrade Readiness Assessments) and monitoring their implementation, by developing e-commerce strategies (ECS), by providing advice and training on how to build legal and regulatory frameworks, by empowering women digital entrepreneurs and by improving the measurement of e-commerce and the digital economy.



Cambodia following the eTrade Readiness Assessment conducted in 2017 with UNCTAD support, the Royal Government of Cambodia undertook a series of policy and legal reforms in line with the assessment's recommendations to support the e-commerce ecosystem, including an e-Commerce Strategy (2020). In terms of legal frameworks, the Government enacted in 2019 a Consumer Protection Law to promote a fair-trading environment and an E-Commerce Law. Further, it developed a Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035, which sets out a long-term vision to build a vibrant digital economy and society to accelerate economic growth.

Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Reviews



Uganda In 2020 UNCTAD implemented the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Review (STIP Review) of Uganda. The policy recommendations made in the STIP review, which cover both the general framework conditions for innovation in the country and the role of science, technology and innovation in addressing key development challenges, formed the base for the 2021 National Science, Technology and Innovation. The new national policy document provides strategic guidance for Uganda's STI actors and aims at the realization of national development aspirations as expressed in Vision 2040 to transform Uganda into an inclusive, sustainable and industrialized economy driven by innovation.

Support to graduation from LDC status



Bhutan In light of the country's upcoming graduation from LDC status, UNCTAD is accompanying the country in preparing its Smooth Transition Strategy. The country is scheduled to graduate on 13 December 2023. The strategy can thus be expected to build on and seek synergies with Bhutan's COVID-19 national response programmes, including the Economic Contingency Plan, Four Point Formula for boosting recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, and the 21st Century Economic Roadmap being developed with the aim of charting the long-term development vision for the country. The latter vision encompasses the leveraging of technology and innovation and empowering all citizens to achieve wellbeing improvements. Bhutan's national smooth-transition strategy is expected to accord special consideration to the challenges that pose a potential hindrance to Bhutan reducing its economic and natural vulnerabilities and adjusting to the loss of LDC-associated benefits.

DMFAS - Debt Management and Financial Analysis System



Madagascar Technical assistance delivered by the DMFAS Programme to Madagascar included technical and functional training on the DMFAS software as well as capacity-building on data validation and debt statistics and debt analysis. The country publishes quarterly debt statistics bulletins, prepares medium-term debt strategy and conduct debt sustainability analysis annually. Together with parallel organizational restructuring of the debt management functions, the DMFAS technical assistance resulted in qualitative and comprehensive debt records, enhanced capacity to report on debt to conduct analysis for policy-making purposes, leading to better transparency.

Trade facilitation Programme



Sudan Rasha, mother of four and a member of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) of Sudan, recently participated in Module 1 of UNCTAD Empowerment Programme for NTFCs. The training helps Rasha and other members of Sudan National Working Group on Trade Facilitation to learn about worldwide best practices to ease trade procedures and understand the implications of different trade facilitation reforms for the country. She highlights: «this training is relevant as we all get a better understanding of what trade facilitation is all about. This Module is sufficient, very satisfying, clear and well done.»

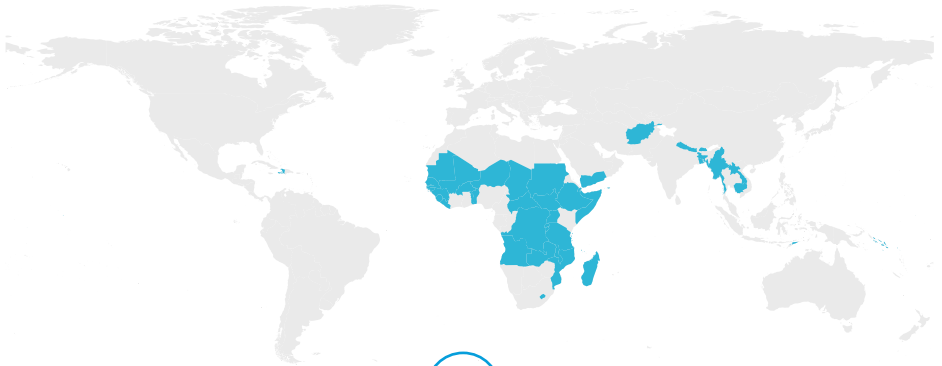
Empretec and business linkages



Mozambique The national business linkage programme, in cooperation with the National Centro de Promoção de Investimentos and Enterprise Mozambique Foundation as its main local counterparts, benefited 43 farmers who were supplying barley to Cervejas de Moçambique Breweries, a subsidiary of SAB Miller of South Africa. As a result of the programme, farmers diversified their sources of income and learned how to run farms as a business: their annual income increased from an average of US\$300 to US\$700.

TrainForTrade Programme

Since 1998, TRAINFORTRADE has strengthened the capacities of 3,978 port operators and trade practitioners (28% women) from 45 Least Developed Countries for a total of 358,907 hours or 59,604 days of blended learning in the fields of Port Management, Trade Statistics, and eCommerce, as well as in the course Building Port Resilience Against Pandemics. The over-all satisfaction rate was 87%.



eRegulations and eRegistrations Systems

eRegulations Investment information portals showing investors how to register a business and obtain all mandatory licenses step-by-step and with full transparency are operational in 8 LDCs (Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Lesotho, Mali, Rwanda and Tanzania). eRegulation Trade information portals are in operation in 7 LDCs (Afghanistan, Burundi, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Uganda and Tanzania). They show detailed information on import, export and transit procedures and allow countries to comply with the Article 1 of the WTO Bali agreement. For both types of portals, the programme has trained and worked with national civil servants to thoroughly analyze and document all procedures and then to significantly simplify those procedures by cutting the number of forms, requirements, steps, time, costs, overlaps and redundancies. Online single windows for business registration and licensing are in operation in Benin, Bhutan, Lesotho and Mali. These allow users to create companies entirely online, with one form, one upload of documents and one payment.



In **Benin**, company registrations increased more than 91 percent since the launch of the online single window in 2020. Fee income to the government rose by the same amount. One third of business owners were women, one half were under thirty and one half were based outside the capital, reflecting the greater ease with which vulnerable populations can access online systems.



Bhutan is the fastest place in the world to register a sole proprietorship (cottage industry) online. The time taken is less than a minute.

TESTIMONIES



Investment Policy Reviews

“The Group of 77 and China wishes to highlight the comprehensive analysis of the investment frameworks of member states, through UNCTAD investment policy reviews...The Group welcomes the recent release of the IPRs of Côte d’Ivoire, Angola and Chad ... These recent IPRs provide concrete, timely and actionable advice, in line with the tradition of the UNCTAD IPR programme.”

**Statement of Zambia, on behalf of the Group 77 and China,
Trade and Development Board, sixty-seventh session**

9 September 2020, Geneva

“The IPR is an objective and substantive document, with well-targeted recommendations and it will help Chad to improve its investment climate”

Counsellor Minister, Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations

12 November 2019, Geneva

Support to graduation from least developed country status

In Cambodia, the Comoros Djibouti, Senegal, and Zambia, UNCTAD is undertaking research and advisory services to prepare the General Assembly-mandated Vulnerability Profiles and engage with national stakeholders to better understand the graduation process and its potential implications for national development and participation in the global economy.



DMFAS

“After the implementation of the DMFAS system at the Public Debt Directorate, decision-makers benefited from complete, reliable and up-to-date data. [...] Thanks to DMFAS, our public debt management has become more transparent, effective and efficient, in line with the objectives of our decision-makers.”

Volatantely Randrianjanaka
Treasury General Directorate of Madagascar

November 2021

“Special thanks go to the UNCTAD team for initiating the idea of a virtual training and facilitating the first of this kind; an action which clearly demonstrates that even amidst Covid 19 challenges, there is still a silver lining as we continue to explore new ways of doing business. It is for this reason that I am expressing my deep gratitude to the UNCTAD for its continued support to Debt management.”

Jennifer Muhuruzi
Director Treasury Services and Assets management, Uganda

November 2021

Trade, gender and development

Ms. King'ola credited UNCTAD's training with enhancing her understanding of customs rules and procedures, saying it *“has made my business life easier.”* Previously, she used to sell the cereals through unofficial routes to evade taxes and duties, but she ended up incurring losses, paying bribes, losing consignments and paying fines when her goods were seized by customs officials. Through the training she also realized that by using the official border posts she will have legal avenues to file a complaint if she finds an assessment unfair. *“Because I have in-depth knowledge of my rights and obligations as a small-scale cross-border trader,”* she added, *“I trust that my business has a bright future.”*



Fostering productive capacities and structural economic transformation

The work UNCTAD is undertaking through the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, in the context of the ACOM project financed by the European Union, has been highly relevant in supporting the Government's efforts towards diversification of the economy out of extractive industries and its integration into regional and international trade. The programme's holistic, multisectoral approach, and its focus on capacitating Angola's human resources, combined with the technical expertise of UNCTAD, has demonstrated enormous potential and show important results so far. The Train for Trade II Programme has also effectively promoted inter-institutional dialogue between both public and private sectors within Angolan institutions."

H.E. Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Victor Fernandes, in the Trade and Development Board meeting in June 2021.

Fostering micro, small and medium-sized enterprises resilience and growth

"The UNCTAD's e-accounting tool supports small informal businesses in Uganda with a simplified, comprehensive and structured accounting, record keeping and reporting platform. This tool is expected to support the boosting of internal capacities of Ugandan businesses by easing formalization and establishing an appropriate accounting system to track performance and boost the competitiveness of local enterprises to participate in the regional opportunities."

Richard Mubiru, Manager, Enterprise Growth and Development of the Private Sector Development Unit, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda

"UNCTAD further supported Uganda in training of trainers for SMEs formalization. This is expected to create a critical mass of BDS and accounting trainers to support SMEs' formalization and transition into medium compliant entities."

Richard Mubiru, Uganda

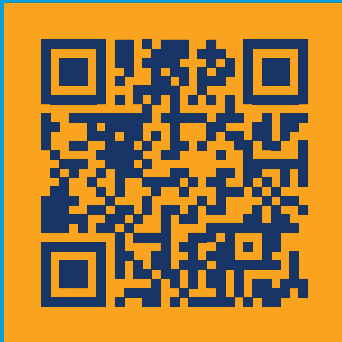


Holistic support programmes developing LDCs' productive capacities

“The work UNCTAD is undertaking through the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, in the context of the ACOM project financed by the European Union, has been highly relevant in supporting the Government's efforts towards diversification of the economy out of extractive industries and its integration into regional and international trade. The programme's holistic, multisectoral approach, and its focus on capacitating Angola's human resources, combined with the technical expertise of UNCTAD, has demonstrated enormous potential and show important results so far. The Train for Trade II Programme has also effectively promoted inter-institutional dialogue between both public and private sectors within Angolan institutions.”

H.E. Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Victor Fernandes, in the Trade and Development Board meeting in June 2021.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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