



Regional Workshop on Coherent Strategies for Productive Capacities Development in African Least Developed Countries

Report and Recommendations

*Date: 12 – 13 October 2022
Four Points by Sheraton, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania*

I. Background

As part of activities planned under the 12th Tranche United Nations Development Account project on “Coherent Strategies for Productive Capacities Development in African Least Developed Countries” which is being implemented in Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Tanzania, UNCTAD, REPOA and the Tanzania Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade organized a regional workshop on “Coherent Strategies for Productive Capacities Development in African Least Developed Countries” from 12-13 October 2022 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The regional workshop was a follow-up to the national workshops that were held in Tanzania (April 2021), Rwanda (May 2021) and Burkina Faso (June 2022). The regional workshop brought together officials from the beneficiary countries, selected non-beneficiary African countries, representatives of the private sector, partner implementing agencies, and international experts to:

- Discuss challenges and opportunities associated with developing coherent strategies for productive capacities development;
- Identify recommendations on possible measures and options to address existing constraints on productive capacities development;
- Share best practices and experiences in formulating and implementing holistic and coherent approaches to productive capacities development amongst government officials and stakeholders; and
- Draw lessons for the three project beneficiary countries from the experiences of non-LDCs in Africa as well as non-African countries that have successfully developed productive capacities.

II. Focus areas

The workshop had an opening ceremony and five substantive sessions spread over two days. The first session provided background information on the concept of productive capacities and the state of productive capacities development in African LDCs based on an index of productive capacities developed by UNCTAD. There was also a discussion of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Tanzania and Rwanda as well as the challenges these countries are facing in effectively using SEZs to foster productive capacities. The second session explored recent developments and initiatives adopted by governments of the three project beneficiary countries to enhance productive capacities. Session three focused on sharing the experiences of non-project beneficiary countries in building productive capacities, with Singapore, Mauritius, Botswana, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe used as case studies. Session four examined how to strengthen the private sector in Africa to foster productive transformation. The last session was on cross-cutting issues that affect the development of productive capacities in Africa, with a focus on gender and inequality.

III. Opening statements

The regional workshop was opened by Honourable **Exaud Kigahe**, the Deputy Minister for Investment, Industry and Trade, United Republic of Tanzania. In his remarks, he stated that the workshop was being held at a time when economic activities in Tanzania are slowly

recovering from the global economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A full recovery from the pandemic will require coordinated efforts including putting in place appropriate policies and strategies to develop productive capacities geared towards job creation and improving living conditions of the Tanzanian people. Against this backdrop, the workshop is taking place at an opportune time and will provide useful inputs into the ongoing review of the trade and industrial policies in Tanzania. He identified unreliable and costly power supply, inadequate access to financial services, higher cost of credit, and skills shortages as some of the constraints inhibiting manufacturing production in Tanzania. Honourable Kigahe appreciated the program of the regional workshop as well as UNCTAD's support to Tanzania in building productive capacities under the 12th Tranche UN Development Account Project. He also underscored the governments strong commitment to developing domestic productive capacities and transforming the structure of their economy from low to higher productive activities within and across sectors. He concluded his remark by indicating that he hopes the workshop will open our eyes and minds to see what and where the policy-linked limitations towards increasing productivity and productive capacities in Africa are.

Mr. Patrick Osakwe, Chief of the Trade, Poverty, and Inequalities Branch at UNCTAD, made introductory remarks at the event. He thanked the participants for honouring the invitation to participate in the event. He also thanked REPOA and the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade for collaborating with UNCTAD in the organisation of the event. On the theme of the workshop, Mr Osakwe made three points. The first is that the world is experiencing an increase in the frequency of shocks and so there is the need to build resilience through developing productive capacities. The second is the need for consumers to be better integrated into the production transformation agenda through sensitizing them on the need to buy locally made goods. The final point made by Mr Osakwe is that African countries should seize the opportunity created by the COVID-19 pandemic to better harness the potential of women for productive transformation.

Mr. Donald Mmari, Executive Director, REPOA, Tanzania, welcomed participants to Dar es Salaam and the workshop. He expressed thanks to UNCTAD for associating REPOA with the organisation of the regional workshop, which he indicated focuses on a very important issue for Tanzania and other African countries. He stated that there are policy-related constraints to enhancing productivity in Africa and that the workshop will permit participants to find solutions to this common problem facing African countries. He observed that very limited progress has been made by African countries in transforming their economies as reflected in the fact that primary commodities remain dominant, and exports are predominantly low-value and unprocessed commodities. In his view, lack of productive capacities is a major factor responsible for this situation. But it is also a consequence of the lack of coherent policies and strategies to enhance productivity of factors of production. He underscored the need for coherent policies to address factors inhibiting production transformation on the continent, some of which have been identified in the opening remarks by Honourable Exaud Kigahe.

IV. Key messages and lessons learned

The presentations and interactive discussions that featured at the two-day workshop were very interesting and insightful and led to very useful policy messages and recommendations. These are summarized in the section below.

Productive capacities in African LDCs are very low and need to be enhanced. The state of productive capacities in African least developed countries is extremely low both relative to their potential and relative to those of non-LDC developing countries. This low level of productive capacities observed in African LDCs is both a consequence of slow progress in building new capacities as well as the lack of utilization and maintenance of existing capacities. Reversing the current situation requires lifting binding constraints imposed by: lack of good access to credit; skill shortages; poor transport infrastructure; and inadequate, unstable and high cost of power supply. It also requires technological innovation, better institutions, and a stable macroeconomic policy environment.

Boost consumption of domestically produced goods. African governments should put boosting consumption of domestically produced goods on their priority agenda if they want to make more rapid progress in enhancing productive capacities. The development of productive capacities is not only the responsibility of governments and the private sector. Domestic consumers also have a crucial role to play in the process, particularly through patronizing locally made goods to support domestic firms and enable them to thrive. For far too long, the industrialization agenda has been left to governments and firms. Now is the time for domestic consumers to better integrate themselves into the process. And governments can assist them in doing so through awareness and sensitization campaigns at the national level. There is also the need for consumers to have a change of mindset and have confidence in locally produced goods.

Adopt a pragmatic approach to building productive capacities. African countries are formulating and implementing policies to build productive capacities in a changing global environment. This means that they would have to be able to adapt policies to the changing environment to achieve their production transformation goals. It also means that they must be pragmatic in the choice of policies by focusing on what works for them rather than sticking to positions based on ideology. One of the lessons from the experiences of the countries discussed is that building productive capacities in manufacturing does not necessarily require a neglect of agricultural production. The development of both types of activities can be mutually reinforcing thereby ensuring that growth would be sustained.

Special economic zones should be better used as a tool for productive transformation. Special economic zones (SEZs) have been successfully used by both advanced and emerging markets for the development of productive capacities. However, in African LDCs they have not been effectively used for this purpose due in part to poor management of the zones, lack of supporting infrastructure, and deficiencies in legal and regulatory frameworks. One of the lessons we learned from the successful experience of Mauritius is that SEZs play a crucial role in production transformation when they are geared towards addressing priority issues in an economy such as employment creation, provision of foreign exchange, and technology adoption or transfer. Another lesson is that SEZs are more likely to achieve the desired goals when there are good institutions, governance and political stability in a country. In this context, there is the need for African countries to review their approach to SEZs to better harness their potential for transformation.

Ensure that FDI promotion does not put domestic entrepreneurs at a disadvantage. Foreign direct investment (FDI) can play a very important role in fostering production transformation, but its promotion should not be done in a way that puts domestic investors at a disadvantage. One of the lessons learned from the case studies discussed at the meeting is that achieving sustained flows of FDI does not necessarily result from provision of incentives to foreign investors but rather from strengthening of the domestic private sector which sends a clear

signal to foreign investors that the country is a good location for investment. Another lesson that countries have learned is that countries that support domestic investors are less susceptible to capital flow reversals when there is a global crisis.

Address both current and future skill needs. Skills shortages have been identified in virtually all beneficiary countries as major constraints to developing new productive capacities as well as better utilizing existing ones. Addressing this issue effectively will require the adoption of a dynamic education and training strategy and policies that prioritizes both current and future skills need as identified by entrepreneurs. The case study of Singapore discussed at the workshop provided a very useful lesson for African countries in relation to the critical role that the state needs to play in this regard. It was pointed out that in Singapore the government has a forward-looking education and training policy and has an initiative in which an individual training account is set up for children at a very early stage and this permits them to invest in the kinds of training they need to better integrate into the labour market.

Enhance policy implementation. It was indicated that African LDCs already have several development plans and strategies that prioritize productive capacity development and yet they have very low levels of productive capacities. There was the observation that existing plans and strategies are for the most part either not implemented or partially implemented and that this has made it challenging to boost productive capacities in a sustained manner. The case studies of Singapore and Mauritius underscored the importance of policy implementation in achieving the goal of productive transformation and this is a very useful lesson that African LDCs should learn. The experience of Botswana in managing its mineral resources and effectively using it to finance its development program was also highlighted as an important lesson to be learned by African LDCs in terms of how to better manage their mineral resources to promote productive transformation. Regarding enhancing implementation of policies, the setting realistic targets in policy design is critical to ensure that policies will be implemented as planned. Better integration of resource mobilization and allocation plans into the policy formulation process is another way to enhance program implementation. Strengthening public sector accountability and governance frameworks is another mechanism to ensure that policymakers implement policies as planned. There is also the need for policy formulation to consider the political feasibility of policies as it can affect policy implementation, especially in situations where planned policies do not favour powerful interest groups in society.

Avoid policy incoherence. One of the reasons why economic policies to foster productive capacity development have not achieved their desired outcomes in African LDCs is the lack of coherence between macroeconomic policies and between policies across sectors. For example, it is often the case that land, and environmental, policies are not aligned with the goal of industrialisation and macroeconomic policies often lead to prohibitive interest rates that constrain investment. This lack of coherence is observed both at the policy design and implementation phases and needs to be addressed to ensure that government policies are all geared towards the goal of productive transformation. Strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation in the design and implementation of policies is an important first step towards addressing this challenge. But there is also the need for better public-private sector dialogue to ensure that policymakers have a better understanding of the needs and challenges of the private sector and take this into account in policy design to avoid jeopardizing private sector development and the development of productive capacities.

Provide better support for the private sector. The African private sector has lots of ideas to foster production, but it is often constrained by government regulations, poor infrastructure, and lack of support from government. Efforts are needed to change this situation along several lines. First, there needs to be trust between governments and the private sector and this comes from governments genuinely considering the views of the private sector in policy making and addressing them. It also comes from putting in place a credible mechanism to improve and enhance collaboration between the government and the private sector. Second, is the need for governments to harmonize existing regulatory frameworks at the national level to reduce trade and production costs for firms. Third, there is the need for governments to better integrate young entrepreneurs into the industrialisation and transformation agenda. This requires believing in young entrepreneurs, giving them an opportunity to contribute to the development process, and supporting them to operationalize innovative ideas that they have. Finally, governments should strengthen efforts to better support exporters so that they can be competitive and able to survive in export markets. There is also the need for governments to promote setting up of processing industries to encourage exporters to export processed goods rather than raw materials.

Make gender a key pillar in the transformation agenda. Although in most African countries, women account for a larger share of the population than men, they are hardly present in key activities and sectors (such as manufacturing) that are crucial for economic transformation. Women are mostly engaged in agriculture or in the informal sector in urban areas. There is the need for governments to better harness the potential of women for productive transformation to promote sustained and inclusive growth. This requires addressing harmful social norms (such as gender bias in asset allocation and culture of violence against women) that inhibit female participation in economic activities. It also requires addressing binding financial constraints that women face due to, among others, weak access to education and lack of collaterals. Furthermore, there is the need to address gender pay gaps, attract more women in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, provide management and digital skills training for women, and provide mentorship for female entrepreneurs.

Understand role of inequality in production transformation. In the design and implementation of policies to build productive capacities in Africa, policymakers do not often have an appreciation of the role that inequality can play in the production transformation process. As a result, distribution issues are never given the attention they deserve in the discourse on the development of productive capacities. This situation needs to change because inequality can have adverse negative consequences for investment, growth, and political stability thereby jeopardizing the production transformation agenda. It was pointed out that inequality has various dimensions but is fundamentally spatial. The nature of urbanisation and growth, geographic endowments, agglomeration forces, politics, and fiscal capacity, were identified as some of the key drivers of spatial inequality. Furthermore, migration, enhancing connectivity, and place-based policies were identified as some of the policies to combat spatial inequalities and create a more inclusive growth and development process.

FINAL PROGRAMME

12 October 2022

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

Opening Session

09:00 – 09:10 Introductory remarks by Patrick Osakwe, Chief, Trade, Poverty, and Inequalities Branch, UNCTAD

09:10 – 09:20 Welcome remarks by Donald Mmari, Executive Director, REPOA, Tanzania

09:20 – 09:30 Opening statement by Hon. Exaud Silaoneka Kigahe, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade, The United Republic of Tanzania

PART I Productive Capacities and Development in African LDCs

Moderator: Patrick Osakwe, UNCTAD

09:30 – 09:45 Industrialization and Productive Transformation in LDCs
Gerald Runyoro, UNIDO, Tanzania

09:45 – 10:00 Productive Capacities for Poverty Alleviation in LDCs
Antipas Touatam, UNCTAD, Geneva

10:00 – 10:10 Special Economic Zones as Instruments for Building Productive Capacities
Alfred Ngelula, Investment Facilitation Officer, Tanzania Export Processing Zones Authority

10:10 – 10:20 Special Economic Zones and Building Productive Capacities in Rwanda
Fred Mugabe, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Rwanda

10:20 – 10:50 Interactive debate

10:50 – 11:00 Coffee break

PART II Building Productive Capacities in the Project Beneficiary Countries: National Perspectives

Moderator: Patrick Osakwe, UNCTAD

11:00 – 11:20 Recent Developments and Initiatives on Enhancing Productive Capacities in Rwanda (**Adrien Bimenyimana, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Rwanda**)

- 11:20 –11:40 Interactive debate
- 11:40 – 12:00 Recent Developments and Initiatives on Enhancing Productive Capacities in Tanzania (**Lugano Wilson**, Director of Industrial Development, Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade, Tanzania)
- 12:00 –12:20 Interactive debate
- 12:20 – 12:40 Recent Developments and Initiatives on Enhancing Productive Capacities in Burkina Faso (**Siébou Sou**, Director of Policy Formulation, Ministry of Industrial Development, Trade, Crafts and SMEs, Burkina Faso)
- 12:40 –13:00 Interactive debate
- 13:00 –14:00 Lunch break

PART III Experiences of Other Countries in Building Productive Capacities

Moderator: Donald Mmari, REPOA

- 14:00 – 14:20 Building Productive Capacities of **Singapore**: Role of Trade & Investment
Shandre Thangavelu, Regional Director, Southeast Asia, Institute for International Trade, University of Adelaide, Australia
- 14:20 – 14:35 Building Productive Capacities: The **Mauritian** Experience
Bibi Fatwma Abdool Raman Ahmed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives
- 14:35 – 14:50 Building Productive Capacities: The **Botswana** Experience
Katiso Lesupi, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry
- 14:50 – 15:20 Interactive debate
- 15:20 – 15:30 Coffee Break
- 15:30 – 15:45 Building Productive Capacities: The **Zambian** Experience
Trust Mufune, Chief Economist, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry
- 15:45 – 16:00 Building Productive Capacities: The **Zimbabwean** Experience
Enias Muradzvi, Deputy Director, Ministry of Industry and Commerce
- 16:00 – 16:15 Building Productive Capacities: The **Togolese** Experience
Mawussé Dieudonné Akpoto, Project Analyst, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Togo
- 16:15 – 17:00 Interactive debate

PART IV Strengthening the Private Sector in Africa

Moderator: *Zachy Mbenna, Director of Outreach, Membership Services and Capacity Building, Tanzania Private Sector Foundation*

- 09:00 – 09:15 Strengthening the private sector in Burkina Faso
Michel Borrus Ismael Ouattara, Head of Development Support, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Burkina Faso
- 09:15 – 09:30 Challenges facing the private sector in Tanzania
Bruno Daniel, Business Affairs Manager, Kilombero Sugar Company, Morogoro, Tanzania
- 09:30 – 09:45 Challenges facing Exporters in Tanzania
Sylvester Kazi, Export Manager, A to Z Textile Mills Ltd, Arusha, Tanzania
- 09:45 – 10:00 Empowering Young Entrepreneurs in Rwanda
Albert Munyabugingo, Private Sector Foundation, Rwanda
- 10:00 – 10:15 Fostering Inclusive Public-Private Sector Dialogue
Farai Mutambanengwe, Chief Executive Officer, Small and Medium Enterprises Association of Zimbabwe
- 10:15 – 10:45 Interactive debate
- 10:45 – 11:00 Coffee Break

PART V Gender, Inequality and Productive Capacities Development

Moderator: *Patrick Osakwe, UNCTAD*

- 11:00 – 11:15 Women’s Economic Empowerment and Productive Transformation
Loraine Kiswaga, UNWOMEN, Tanzania
- 11:15 – 11:30 Dimensions of Inequality in Tanzania and Implications for Productive Transformation (**Emmanuel Maliti**, Associate Researcher, REPOA, Tanzania)
- 11:30 – 11:45 Income Inequality Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa, **Weyinmi Omamuli**, Senior Economist, UNDP Tanzania
- 11:45 – 12:00 Spatial Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa (**Muna Shifa**, Senior Research Officer, University of Cape Town)
- 12:00 – 12:40 Interactive debate
- 12:40 – 13:00 Closing remarks
- 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

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