



Priorities for the SME ecosystems for the next Programme of Action for the LDCs: Missing middle, SMEs and their productive capacities

Side-event to 2021 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

Organized by the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations (New York), the Permanent Mission of Malawi to the United Nations (New York), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and FCA Investments (Finland)

Date: Tuesday 13 April 2021

Time: 13:15 – 14:45 (New York time); 19:15 – 20:45 Central European time (GMT+1)

The least developed countries' (LDCs') advancing towards sustainable development and eventually graduating requires financing for development, which builds on the sustainable, locally-rooted solutions. The importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for LDC economies has been noted in several studies, including UNCTAD's *LDC Report* series. This side-event adopts an ecosystem viewpoint to the SMEs in LDCs, without forgetting the importance of microenterprises, calling for systemic solutions and cooperation by governments, the United Nations, private sector, financial intermediaries and MSMEs. With a view to contributing to the preparatory process of the LDC5 Conference in 2022, this side-event brings together the above-mentioned actors to deliberate on ways to support the SME ecosystems in the LDCs, contribute to LDCs' development of productive capacities and eventually achieve the SDGs. It discusses which new international support measures can support LDC SMEs, what opportunities digitalization brings to these firms and the broader ecosystem, and how essential services to LDC SMEs can be provided at scale.

Programme

Opening

- Welcome remarks: Ambassador Jukka Salovaara, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations

**Roundtable: Priorities for the SME ecosystems for the next Programme of Action for the LDCs:
Missing middle, SMEs and their productive capacities**

- How MSMEs in LDCs can contribute to developing productive capacities and fostering structural transformation in LDCs: Mr. Rolf Traeger, Chief, LDC Section, UNCTAD
- Missing Middle in as an opportunity for sustainable development in LDC's: Mr. Jukka-Pekka Kärkkäinen, Executive Director, FCA Investments
- Challenges and solutions from an SME perspective: Ms. Leila Omar, Managing Director, SolarLandAfrica, Somalia
- The experience of SME development in Uganda: Mr. John Kakungulu Walugembe , Executive Director, Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises-Uganda
- The contribution of digital technologies and shared services to SME expansion in LDCs: Mr. Michael R. Ingram, Senior Manager, Accenture Development Partnerships

Open discussion

- Debate among meeting participants and panellists

Moderator

Mr. Jussi Ojala, Executive Representative, Private Sector Development, Finn Church Aid

Webex link :

<https://rtce-unog.webex.com/rtce-unog/j.php?MTID=m7aacbeba7844c937cdbc13e75b33bf98>

Meeting number (access code): 183 124 8618

Meeting password: eD8AVUVP22