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**Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD
and their financing**

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Annex I: Review of activities undertaken in 2020*

* This document has not been formally edited.



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Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
DFQF	duty free and quota free
DMFAS	Debt Management and Financial Analysis System
DTIS	Diagnostic trade integration study
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
GSTP	Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries
ICT	information and communication technology
IFFs	illicit financial flows
IIA	international investment agreement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPR	investment policy review
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LDC	least developed country
LLDC	landlocked developing country
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PPP	public-private partnership
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SIDS	Small Island Developing States
STI	Science, technology and innovation
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Country/territory/region codes

AFG	Afghanistan	COI	Comoros
ALB	Albania	COL	Colombia
ALG	Algeria	COS	Costa Rica
ANG	Angola	CPR	China
ANL	Anguilla	CUB	Cuba
ANT	Antigua and Barbuda	CVI	Cabo Verde
ARG	Argentina	CZE	Czechia
ARM	Armenia	DJI	Djibouti
ARU	Aruba	DMI	Dominica
AZE	Azerbaijan	DOM	Dominican Republic
BAH	Bahrain	DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
BAR	Barbados	ECU	Ecuador
BDI	Burundi	EGY	Egypt
BEN	Benin	ELS	El Salvador
BER	Bermuda	EQG	Equatorial Guinea
BES	Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	ERI	Eritrea
BGD	Bangladesh	EST	Estonia
BHU	Bhutan	ETH	Ethiopia
BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUR	Europe
BKF	Burkina Faso	FIJ	Fiji
BOL	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	GAB	Gabon
BOT	Botswana	GAM	Gambia
BRA	Brazil	GBS	Guinea-Bissau
BRU	Brunei Darussalam	GEO	Georgia
BUL	Bulgaria	GHA	Ghana
BYE	Belarus	GIB	Gibraltar
BZE	Belize	GLO	Global
CAF	Central African Republic	GRN	Grenada
CHD	Chad	GUA	Guatemala
CHI	Chile	GUI	Guinea
CMB	Cambodia	GUY	Guyana
CMR	Cameroon	HAI	Haiti

HON	Honduras	MOT	Montserrat
HUN	Hungary	MOZ	Mozambique
IND	India	MYA	Myanmar
INS	Indonesia	NAM	Namibia
INT	Interregional	NCA	New Caledonia
IRA	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	NEP	Nepal
IRQ	Iraq	NER	Niger
IVC	Côte d'Ivoire	NIC	Nicaragua
JAM	Jamaica	NIR	Nigeria
JOR	Jordan	NIU	Niue
KAZ	Kazakhstan	OMA	Oman
KEN	Kenya	PAK	Pakistan
KIR	Kiribati	PAL	Palestinian Authority
KOR	Republic of Korea	PAN	Panama
KUW	Kuwait	PAR	Paraguay
KYR	Kyrgyzstan	PER	Peru
LAO	Lao People's Democratic Republic	PHI	Philippines
LAT	Latvia	PNG	Papua New Guinea
LEB	Lebanon	POL	Poland
LIB	Libya	PRC	Congo
LIR	Liberia	PUE	Puerto Rico
LIT	Lithuania	QAT	Qatar
LSO	Lesotho	RAF	Africa (regional)
MAG	Madagascar	RAS	Asia and the Pacific (regional)
MAL	Malaysia	RER	Europe (regional)
MAR	Mauritius	RLA	Latin America and the Caribbean (regional)
MAU	Mauritania	ROM	Romania
MCD	North Macedonia	RUS	Russian Federation
MDV	Maldives	RWA	Rwanda
MEX	Mexico	SAF	South Africa
MLI	Mali	SAM	Samoa
MLW	Malawi	SAU	Saudi Arabia
MOL	Republic of Moldova	SEN	Senegal
MON	Mongolia	SEY	Seychelles
MOR	Morocco	SIL	Sierra Leone

SIN	Singapore	TIM	Timor-Leste
SLO	Slovakia	TOG	Togo
SOI	Solomon Islands	TON	Tonga
SOM	Somalia	TUK	Turkmenistan
SPM	Saint Pierre and Miquelon	TUN	Tunisia
SRL	Sri Lanka	TUR	Turkey
STH	Saint Helena	TUV	Tuvalu
STK	Saint Kitts and Nevis	UAE	United Arab Emirates
STL	Saint Lucia	UGA	Uganda
STP	Sao Tome and Principe	UKR	Ukraine
STV	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	URT	United Republic of Tanzania
SUD	Sudan	URU	Uruguay
SUR	Suriname	UZB	Uzbekistan
SVN	Slovenia	VAN	Vanuatu
SWA	Eswatini	VEN	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
SYR	Syrian Arab Republic	VIE	Viet Nam
TAJ	Tajikistan	YEM	Yemen
TCI	Turks and Caicos Islands	ZAM	Zambia
THA	Thailand	ZIM	Zimbabwe

Introduction

1. This annex provides a description of the main technical cooperation projects undertaken by UNCTAD in 2020. It is presented in accordance with the four themes specified in the *UNCTAD Toolbox*: transforming economies, fostering sustainable development; tackling vulnerabilities, building resilience; fostering economic efficiency, improving governance; and empowering people, investing in their future. Under each theme, there are a number of products around which projects are grouped. For projects that are not linked with any of the 28 *Toolbox* products,¹ they are reported under the category “Other” of the pertinent theme. A table showing the individual projects implemented under each product and under the category “Other” of each theme is provided. The technical assistance and capacity-building activities, which draw on research conducted by UNCTAD and on policy suggestions arising from the UNCTAD intergovernmental machinery, contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I. Theme A: Transforming economies, fostering sustainable development

2. Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals requires building productive capacity and transforming economies by shifting resources to more productive and sustainable sectors and enhancing their competitiveness. Investment, trade and technology are important channels for achieving economic diversification and structural transformation. Trade and trade-related investment, combined with technology upgrading, could enable countries to improve productivity, develop productive capacities and climb regional and global value chains.

3. UNCTAD technical cooperation helps developing countries attract foreign direct investment (FDI) towards sectors that would lead to economic transformation and sustainable development; better integrate into regional and global value chains; and foster the nexus between trade, productive capacity and employment. It also supports these countries in formulating a services-driven development strategy, developing electronic commerce (e-commerce) and the digital economy, promoting sustainable trade and leveraging science, technology and innovation for productive capacity-building.

4. In this section, 10 products under the theme “Transforming economies, fostering sustainable development” are reported on. The reports highlight main technical cooperation activities carried out in 2020 and key results to date. Technical cooperation projects that are pertinent to the aforementioned theme, but not linked to any of the existing 10 products under this thematic area, are reported on under “A99 Other”.

A1 Investment policy reviews

Table A1

Investment policy reviews: List of projects

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
INT/0T/3AW	Examen des politiques d’investissement et programme de suivi	2003–	Multi-donors

¹ See *UNCTAD Toolbox*, available at <https://unctad.org/webflyer/unctad-toolbox-delivering-results-1>.

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/BAQ	Capacity-building in investment for development	2011–	Multi-donors

5. **Development context.** To fully reap their associated benefits for development, which are not automatic nor evenly spread across countries, foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows should be directed towards activities and projects that lead to enhanced economic and social development. To support beneficiary countries in their efforts to diversify the economy, attract higher levels of FDI and promote sustainable development, UNCTAD conducts diagnostic studies of the legal, regulatory and institutional framework for investment: the investment policy reviews (IPRs). The reviews, which are country-specific, provide action-oriented policy advice and concrete recommendations. To foster their implementation and further build capacity for investment policymaking, UNCTAD provides follow-up support through technical assistance activities.

6. **Objective and features.** The IPR process promotes ownership and learning, and is conducted in five phases:

(a) *Ensuring government ownership of the IPR process.* A review begins at the request of a Government. The counterpart ministry or agency is involved throughout the process and the entire Government takes ownership of the policy recommendations.

(b) *IPR evaluation and advisory report.* The diagnostic phase includes desk research and a fact-finding mission by UNCTAD technical staff. Policymakers at the highest level and a wide range of stakeholders are brought into the process, including line ministries and agencies, universities and other research institutions. Interviews and consultations are also held with representatives of the private sector, non-governmental institutions and the donor community active in the country.

(c) *Dialogue on IPR recommendations and intergovernmental review.* Once the draft report is ready, beneficiary countries agree to go through a review process which includes a national stakeholders' workshop to discuss the findings of the draft report and review its recommendations. It is followed by an intergovernmental peer review, which draws upon the experiences of other countries in attracting and benefiting from investment, including benchmarking against international best practices.

(d) *Implementation and follow-up technical assistance.* The review process is designed with one key purpose: making FDI work for sustainable development. The finalization and publication of the IPR report is the preamble to the core focus of the programme, namely the delivery of technical assistance to help beneficiary countries meet their development objectives by attracting higher levels and more diversified types of FDI inflows, while maximizing their developmental benefits and limiting potentially negative impact. The implementation phase is carried out through short-term action plans and multi-agency medium-term technical assistance.

(e) *Implementation report and additional follow-up actions.* About five years after the completion of the review, UNCTAD conducts an assessment of the implementation of its recommendations and identifies the need for further technical assistance.

7. **Outputs.** In 2020, the main outputs delivered by the programme included:

(a) Preparation and publication of the IPR of Seychelles.

(b) Publication of the IPR of Côte d'Ivoire.

(c) Publication of the report on the implementation of the IPR of Nepal.

(d) Background research for the implementation reports of Burkina Faso, Ecuador, the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan.

(e) Development of a new tool – the Live implementation matrix. This tool will assist member States to better address the challenges of dynamic investment policymaking

at country level and improve prospects for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By providing timely and up-to-date information on investment policy reform, the Live implementation matrix will contribute to foster ownership of the IPR recommendations, strengthen implementation results, improve transparency, enhance accountability, strengthen the tracking of reforms, and highlight technical assistance and capacity-building needs. The matrix came into operation at the end of 2020 and is being used by Ecuador, Seychelles and Uzbekistan.

(f) Technical assistance activities and advisory services to support the implementation of the IPR recommendations and to deal more effectively with issues related to investment policies, promotion strategies, international investment agreements and business facilitation. The beneficiaries from these activities included, at the country level, Angola, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mongolia, Nepal, the Republic of Moldova, Seychelles and Uzbekistan. Regional activities on capacity-building for investment policymaking have also been delivered targeting notably French-speaking African countries, including the West African Economic and Monetary Union.

8. The following activities were implemented in 2020 at the country level and for group of countries:

9. *Angola.* Following the publication of the IPR of Angola in 2019 (undertaken in the context of the European Union-UNCTAD joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II), UNCTAD engaged with the Government on capacity-building and advisory activities to support the implementation of the IPR recommendations. The activities undertaken include a review of existing bilateral investment treaties (BIT), the provision of assistance to develop a new model treaty and online discussions to exchange on and validate the findings. They also include preliminary work to prepare a strategic study to promote and facilitate investment in the agricultural sector, undertaken in cooperation with the Angolan investment promotion agency, AIPLEX, and advisory services to strengthen investment promotion efforts.

10. *Armenia.* As part of the follow-up activities following the IPR of Armenia, and with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCTAD prepared a strategy report in cooperation with the Office of the President of Armenia. In line with the vision set forward for the country to make it a worldwide hub for innovation, the report aims to assist the authorities in identifying priority actions to contain divestment and support new and existing investors, based on the country's comparative advantage in high-tech, software and engineering activities, with a special focus on artificial intelligence, data science and deep technology, as well as food safety and security. The report was completed in June 2020.

11. *Burkina Faso.* UNCTAD provided assistance to further improve the investment environment and put in place new measures to address ongoing and emerging challenges the country faces, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, UNCTAD organized an online dialogue, which took place on 30 October 2020, to discuss policy and institutional best practices to strengthen investment promotion and facilitation.

12. *Cabo Verde.* UNCTAD, together with members of the United Nations country team, contributed to the preparation of the MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Integrated Policy Support) and INFF (Integrated national financing framework) for the country. Several meetings, chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, took place to prepare these two instruments, which include much needed actions to address the needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the other challenges the country faces. The Prime Minister wrote to the United Nations country team to acknowledge the support received and express his appreciation for the work accomplished (letter dated 30 December 2020).

13. *Côte d'Ivoire.* The IPR was printed in early 2020, and discussions took place throughout the year on measures to take to implement the IPR recommendations and on the needs of technical assistance to support the Government's efforts. The intergovernmental presentation, initially planned for April 2020, did not take place due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the preference for a physical event. The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire was expected to lead the country's delegation.

14. *Ecuador*. UNCTAD started to assess the implementation of the IPR recommendations and to advise on measures that could be taken to further improve the investment environment and attract quality FDI. The work is being carried out through the Live implementation matrix. UNCTAD also provided inputs and comments to the country on its draft National Investment Policy (NIP) and is expected to be further involved in the next phase of this process in 2021.

15. *Jamaica*. UNCTAD provided detailed comments and inputs on the draft National Investment Policy of the country in October 2020.

16. *Mongolia*. UNCTAD started preparing the assessment of the degree to which the recommendations of the IPR, completed in 2013, have been implemented. The fact-finding mission, expected to take place in 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNCTAD also provided inputs and comments on the draft national investment policy prepared by the Government.

17. *Nepal*. UNCTAD assessed the degree to which the recommendations of the IPR have been implemented. The preparation of the report enabled UNCTAD to gather all relevant information on reforms undertaken to improve the investment environment, and to exchange with stakeholders on new and emerging challenges faced by the country and actions to take to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The report on the implementation of the IPR was completed and published in early 2020.

18. *Republic of Moldova*. UNCTAD provided inputs to the country's MAPS and INFF process and a Sustainable Development Goal Fund project. These inputs were notably informed by the IPR of the country, published in 2013, and the analysis of the IPR of South-East Europe, which was completed in 2017. UNCTAD also contributed to the Moldova Business Week through a keynote presentation on latest FDI trends and challenges on investment policymaking, including those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

19. *Seychelles*. In 2020, UNCTAD completed and published the IPR of Seychelles. The IPR reviewed the regulatory framework for investment, including FDI, and proposed a strategy to strengthen entrepreneurship to foster a flourishing local private sector and build linkages with FDI in order to diversify economic activity and contribute to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. A fact-finding mission took place from 20 to 31 January 2020 in Victoria, Seychelles, to meet a wide range of stakeholders from the public and private sector (domestic and foreign), as well as foreign embassies and other intergovernmental organizations and gather all relevant information to draft the IPR. It included a high-level presentation on 23 January 2020 to the Vice-President of Seychelles, members of Cabinet and private sector representatives on investment policies and strategies and approaches to address development challenges in a small island developing State. A technical workshop was also held on 30 January 2020 on approaches to strengthen entrepreneurship to stimulate local private sector development and to derive more benefits from FDI. Speaking on the occasion of the Celebration of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day (25 June 2020), the Vice-President of the country expressed his appreciation for the IPR process and stressed that its recommendations would serve well to guide investment policy initiatives. A national dialogue took place online (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) during the months of July and August in order to share the findings and recommendations of the draft IPR and collect comments and inputs to finalize it. On 10 December 2020, UNCTAD organized an online dialogue with key stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the IPR recommendations and to offer a training on the utilization of the Live implementation matrix. Seychelles will become the first country to start tracking the implementation of their IPR recommendations immediately following the publication of the report.

20. *Eurasian Economic Union countries*. Together with representatives of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries, UNCTAD discussed investment strategies and policies to attract FDI to the region and to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through effective investment promotion initiatives.

21. *Uzbekistan*. UNCTAD started assessing the implementation of the IPR recommendations and advising on measures that could be taken to further improve the

investment environment and attract quality FDI. This work is being carried out through the Live implementation matrix.

22. *French-speaking African countries.* On 10 July 2020, UNCTAD participated in the annual conference of the RIAFPI (Réseau international des agences francophones de promotion des investissements/International network of French-speaking investment promotion agencies). Organized online, the meeting took place under the theme “COVID-19 and promotion of private investment in a French-speaking area: which measures to take for sustainable investment?”. The presentation by UNCTAD highlighted the most recent data on FDI and latest investment policy developments. It then focused on key actions governments were taking around the world to strengthen their efforts to promote FDI, including enhancing digital services, continuing with legal and regulatory reforms, and improving the targeting of investors. The meeting gathered representatives from several French-speaking African countries, development partners, including France, ANIMA Investment Network (the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Investment Promotion Agencies), as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society, and provided an excellent opportunity for a rich discussion on investment policymaking in times of a pandemic.

23. *West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries.* Members of the WAEMU (eight countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo) made a presentation during a three-day workshop to share experiences on investment policymaking and on addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other participants included the Central Bank for West African countries, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the International Institute for Water and Environment and of the Initiative for Policy. The discussions were rich and led to a series of recommendations, including for UNCTAD to work with the WAEMU secretariat to help member States adopt the eRegulation programme, digitalize their services to businesses and design a regional project to further promote the adoption of policies conducive to investment.

24. **Results and impact.** Overall, the IPRs have played a key role to strengthen the investment policies and strategies of developing countries and economies in transition. This has enabled them to attract higher levels of FDI and derive larger development gains, while minimizing as much as possible the potential negative effects, in line with the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development (IPFSD). Furthermore, many activities to support the implementation of the IPR recommendations have been undertaken under the programme.² Evidence of impact can be illustrated at three levels – country commitment and endorsement of recommendations, implementation of IPR recommendations, and impact on investment flows and the investment environment.

Commitment at the highest level and endorsement of recommendations

25. The importance and relevance of the IPR work is reflected by the involvement of Heads of State or Government in the process and their commitment to implement its outcome. In most cases, the IPRs have been presented to and discussed with Heads of State and cabinet ministers. Development partners have also directly expressed their interest, as the following endorsements show:

(a) “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.

² For further references on the IPR programme, see: (a) UNCTAD (2020). Live Implementation Matrix: Fostering investment reforms for sustainable development. UNCTAD/DIAE/PCB/2020/3. December. Geneva. (b) Sauvart K (2020). *The WIR at 30: Contributions to National and Global Investment Policymaking*. AIB Insights, vol. 20, December. (c) UNCTAD (2018). *Implementation Reports: Lessons learned*. UNCTAD/DIAE/PCB/2018/3. September. Geneva.

(b) “I would like to thank UNCTAD for the wonderful job done. The IPR is a reference for the Government and for investors”. President of Armenia (20 January 2020, Zurich, on receiving a printed copy of the IPR of Armenia).

(c) “I would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to UNCTAD for providing Seychelles with time, skills and knowledge to help us identify the opportunities that exist”. Vice-President of Seychelles (25 June 2020, Celebration of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, online meeting).

(d) “Particularly effective areas of UNCTAD activities include [DIAE] Investment Policy Reviews where evaluations have reported increases in foreign direct investment inflows and increased knowledge levels of stakeholders.” MOPAN 2019 Assessments: UNCTAD.

(e) “The IPR programme is not only at the core of the UNCTAD mandate, it is highly useful for moving forward in the path towards the Sustainable Development Goals.” Representative of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations (12 November 2019, Geneva).

(f) “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).

Implementation of IPR recommendations

26. Another benchmark of the impact of IPRs is the extent to which Governments have implemented the IPR recommendations.

27. Since the inception of the IPR programme, UNCTAD has published 50 IPRs benefiting more than 55 economies worldwide. Assessments conducted in some of these countries showed that to date more than 470 recommendations have been implemented. A significant number of IPR recommendations were implemented with the technical assistance of UNCTAD (about 40 per cent of them). This assistance took different forms, including advisory services on policy, legal, regulatory and institutional matters.

28. The assessments showed that beneficiary countries have been active reformers, with all of them implementing or partially implementing over 80 per cent of the recommendations contained in their IPR. In some economies, this figure rises to 96 per cent.³

Direct impact on investment flows and improvement of the investment environment

29. It is difficult to assess the correlation between the implementation of IPR recommendations and an increase in FDI flows, although this is one of the key objectives of the requesting country. One of the goals of the review is to improve the quality of FDI and ensure that it contributes more effectively to sustainable development. In this respect, countries could experience a decline in flows but an improvement in the development impact of FDI and the operations of investors. Similarly, it is difficult to compare the FDI performance of countries that have completed an implementation report, which range widely in geographic location, income level and political context, against a similar panel of economies that have not received an IPR. However, data show that between 2000–2009 and 2010–2019, FDI inflows rose by 48 per cent worldwide while they grew by 110 per cent in 15 countries for which an assessment of the implementation of IPR recommendations has been conducted.⁴ Furthermore, within this group of 15 economies, it is possible to discern a positive correlation between the increase in FDI flows and the rate of implementation of

³ UNCTAD had published, by 2020, 17 implementation reports (Benin, Botswana, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Nepal, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) to assess the degree to which they have implemented their IPR recommendations.

⁴ See UNCTAD (2020). Live Implementation Matrix: Fostering investment reforms for sustainable development. UNCTAD/DIAE/PCB/2020/3. December. Geneva.

IPR recommendations: that is, countries that implement more, experience a greater increase in FDI.

30. Another indicator of IPR impact is countries' commitment to reform as measured by their progress in international business rankings, which assess the operational environment for the private sector.⁵ Two thirds of the economies with an implementation report have featured as a top ten reformer in the Doing Business rankings since 2006. Of these, six economies were featured in multiple years.

31. Finally, another way to attest for the overwhelming expression of interest in the IPRs is illustrated by the number of countries that have requested to benefit from the programme, including follow-up technical assistance. Official requests for investment policy reviews are in the pipeline for 29 countries: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Central African Republic, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Fiji, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Malawi, Mali, Nicaragua, Oman, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Saint Lucia, South Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Turkmenistan.

Innovating to enhance the impact of the recommendations contained in the UNCTAD IPRs

In 2020, UNCTAD put in place a new tool – the Live implementation matrix. The tool aims at strengthening support to member States in their efforts to implement the IPR recommendations. It will assist member States to better address the challenges of dynamic investment policymaking at country level and improve prospects for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By providing timely and up-to-date information on investment policy reform, the Live implementation matrix will contribute to:

- Foster ownership of IPR recommendations
- Strengthen implementation results
- Improve transparency
- Enhance accountability
- Strengthen the tracking of reforms
- Highlight technical assistance and capacity-building needs.

Source: UNCTAD (2020). Live Implementation Matrix: Fostering investment reforms for sustainable development. UNCTAD/DIAE/PCB/2020/3. December. Geneva.

⁵ Governance and business-related indices abound from several organizations. Despite the inadequacies and limitations intrinsic in such indices and rankings, their publication means that countries are exposed to global scrutiny to an unprecedented extent. Most countries have internalized the need for quality regulations but what remains problematic, most of the time, is proper implementation. UNCTAD advice has been to prioritize reforms, not chasing a higher ranking but more effective regulations, as well as their implementation. For more information see, for example: UNCTAD (2011). *Investment Policy Reviews: Shaping Investment Policies around the world*. United Nations: New York and Geneva.

A2 Services policy reviews

Table A2
Services policy reviews

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
No projects			

32. **Development context.** The services economy has gained increased importance over the last decade, contributing a major share to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment, including in developing economies. The services sector is not only important but can also help improve efficiency and competitiveness in all sectors of the economy, as services constitute essential inputs to many other products and services. The sector generates opportunities for greater income, productivity, employment, investment, and trade, and also contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by providing essential services including health, education, energy, transport, and telecommunications. Services also play a major catalytic role in the expansion of international supply chains. Positively integrating developing countries – especially the least developed countries and small economies – into the global services economy and increasing their participation in services production and trade is essential. Despite the significant potential of the services sector, many developing countries face challenges in reaping the benefits of services trade for development, owing to their weakness in supply capacities. Maximizing the positive contributions and pro-development outcomes of the services sector requires the coordination of trade policies with several other policy dimensions, good regulation and institutions capable of promoting domestic supply capacity.

33. **Objectives.** UNCTAD work on services policy reviews (SPRs) is aimed to assist developing countries in assessing their services economy and trade and reviewing their existing policy and regulatory frameworks to inform their efforts to formulate best-fit national services regulatory and institutional frameworks to develop competitive productive capabilities in services sector and better engage in international trade negotiations and agreements dealing with services. SPRs are a systematic review of economic, regulatory and institutional frameworks, and support developing countries' informed policy making, regulatory formulation and institution building, as well as trade negotiations. SPRs serve as a toolkit to allow policymakers and regulators to assess the potential of services productive capacities and trade in order to identify constraints impeding services sector development and ascertain practical solutions and a coherent policy mix of trade and other policies.

34. **Outputs.** UNCTAD provides demand-based assistance on services assessments – services policy reviews, including specific country- and sector-focused services assessments – that examine policy and regulatory frameworks and the potential impact of trade liberalization. Such assessments provide beneficiary countries with the data and information necessary for making informed policy choices about accelerating national services development and about the liberalization and regulation of services sectors at the national, regional, and international levels.

35. To date, SPRs have been conducted for Bangladesh, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda and Uganda.

36. In 2020, UNCTAD concluded its first regional services policy review which was on the ECOWAS region.⁶ The review spanned 13 services sectors such as financial services (banking and insurance), telecommunications services, transport (road and air), tourism services, energy services, professional services (accounting, legal and architectural), cultural services, education services and engineering services. The two-volume report made various overarching recommendations as well as 79 sector-specific recommendations.

⁶ UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/2020/1, UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/2020/2.

A national SPR for Morocco was also concluded in 2020 that focused upon the pharmaceutical and logistics services sectors.

37. Also in 2020, UNCTAD concluded the publication regarding the second SPR of Paraguay. After undertaking a first assessment in 2014, the country requested UNCTAD to undertake a second SPR, now with a focus on river transport services and on professional services linked to the construction sector. This study also includes an analysis of trade in value-added to explore the linkages of services with the whole economy. This highlights how strengthening the services sector can improve the production and trade of downstream farming and manufacturing sectors that use services' inputs. The incorporation of this analysis in this SPR builds on lessons from UNCTAD–European Union project on the “Measurement of services value-added in exports and analysis of related services and trade policies” and confirms the synergies between several technical assistance initiatives of UNCTAD on services. In 2020, UNCTAD organized and participated in the following meetings:

(a) The African Union 9th Stakeholders Retreat, on contribution and implication of services policy reviews to national development policies (16–17 December, Geneva–Addis Ababa, virtual meeting);

(b) Coordination meeting of UNCTAD/Moroccan Ministry of Trade/UNDP to review the progress in the preparation of the SPR of Morocco (1 July, Geneva–Rabat, virtual meeting).

38. **Results and impacts.** Services policy reviews for selected countries generated important data and information which can be referenced by the beneficiary countries in national services policy formulation as well as in multilateral and regional trade negotiations. UNCTAD ground-level support on services policy reviews, customized advice to specific countries, advisory services and workshops enhanced the technical capacity of trade officials and policymakers to develop services economy in accordance with their development objectives. UNCTAD continued to receive requests for support on services policy reviews from a variety of countries (Cuba, Ecuador, Malawi and Uzbekistan). To meet the needs of these countries, it is necessary to secure adequate funding for technical assistance on services policy reviews.

A3 Trade policy framework reviews

Table A3
Trade policy framework reviews

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
No projects			

39. **Development context.** Promoting a coherent and integrated approach to national trade policy formulation and implementation became a salient challenge for national policymakers, as an increasing number of countries reformulate their national trade policy frameworks and strategies to better draw development benefit from trade and respond to the imperatives of the Sustainable Development Goals, including in progressing towards the achievement of Goal 17.11 on increasing the exports of developing countries, Goal 8 (economic growth) and Goal 9 (industry, innovating and infrastructure). Developing countries and countries with economies in transition continue to face significant challenges in the formulation of development-oriented trade policy framework that are best fit to their national circumstances and development needs. Effectively done, trade policy can drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Linking trade policy and productive capacity and structural transformation is thus crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. **Objectives.** The aim is for trade policy framework reviews to contribute to the (re)formulation and implementation of national trade policy regimes according to a

country's own development priorities and needs. The reviews, via research and training activities, provide the tools to policymakers in developing countries and transition economies that enable them to set their own priorities, make impact assessments of different policy options and devise the best actions, including at the sectoral level. UNCTAD provides support to individual countries in the assessment and reassessment of national trade policy regimes to help them elaborate new comprehensive, development-centred trade policy frameworks. The objective of support is to assess, develop, elaborate, and implement a new generation of trade policy measures and strategies as well as to promote and strengthen self-sustainable national institutional capacities on trade policy and negotiations and in participating effectively in, and benefiting from, international trade. These activities contribute to enhancing the understanding of trade policy community of the contribution of trade to economic recovery, growth, and sustainable development, and equipping the countries concerned with policy analysis and policy framework that promote policy coherence to support inclusive and sustainable development. Trade policy frameworks (TPFs) have helped countries in a systematic, comprehensive, and strategic manner. These TPFs focus on identifying key sectors for diversification with the potential to bring higher economic value, setting the best-fit trade policies to back up those development priorities, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and establishing a trade policy framework to ensure an effective and coherent implementation of such strategies.

41. **Outputs.** UNCTAD assisted beneficiary countries in assessing and preparing Millennium Development Goal/Sustainable Development Goal-oriented trade policy frameworks. Up-to-date reviews have been conducted for Algeria, Angola, Botswana, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Namibia, Panama, Tunisia and Zambia⁷ and focused on national policies and strategies needed to achieve inclusive and sustained development and developmental provisions and flexibilities that are particularly important in creating an enabling environment through the international trading system. These analyses and policy recommendations were reviewed and validated by national stakeholders and associated advisory and capacity-building support has strengthened stakeholders' understanding and analytical skills. This has supported the formulation, updating and reformulation of actual trade policies, and fostered inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations for inclusive trade policymaking. Several countries have embarked on the implementation of recommended policy measures. Such experience could be usefully replicated in a broader number of countries in need.

42. UNCTAD supported the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Guyana in updating its new trade strategy within the framework of Trade Policy Framework for Guyana as the country prepared for new resource endowments resulting from the discovery of oil reserves and finalised Trade Policy Framework for Guyana.⁸

43. In 2020, UNCTAD organized and participated in the national workshop "Assistance to Guyana on updating its trade policy" (9 September, Geneva–Georgetown, virtual meeting).

44. UNCTAD launched a Development Account project (13th tranche) in early 2021 in support of trade policy formulation for post-conflict Arab countries (Iraq and State of Palestine).

45. **Results and impacts.** UNCTAD support on trade policy formulation and implementation has been instrumental in several respects. It has facilitated consideration, and/or adoption, by Governments, of best-fit trade policy options and strategies that can help strengthen productive capacities and increase participation in international trade in a manner that maximizes the potential of development gains, especially job creation and poverty reduction.

46. UNCTAD support contributed to (a) improved ability of policymakers and trade negotiators to analyse, formulate and implement trade policies and strategies that are best fit with holistic and comprehensive approaches to ensure that increased trade contribute to

⁷ See [https://unctad.org/publications-search?f\[0\]=product%3A650](https://unctad.org/publications-search?f[0]=product%3A650).

⁸ UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/2020/3.

greater resilience of productive capacity and employment; (b) better-informed and better-trained trade officials in country groupings such as Africa, the LDCs and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP); and (c) the advancement of multilateral and regional trade negotiations with greater focus on the development dimension and a proactive approach towards ensuring that negotiations and agreements are coherent and emphasize development aspects framework that promote policy coherence to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNCTAD continued to receive requests for support on trade policy frameworks from a variety of countries and organisations (Namibia, Agadir Technical Unit, D-8 Organization of Economic Cooperation, African Union). To meet the needs of these countries or organizations, it is necessary to secure adequate funding for technical assistance on trade policy frameworks.

A4 Science, technology and innovation policy reviews

Table A4

Science, technology and innovation policy reviews

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ROA-1819 (L11)	Strengthening policy coherence and integration to ensure that science, technology and innovation support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa and Asia	2018–	Development Account

47. **Development context.** The basic assumption that underpins this work is that innovation, particularly innovation based on knowledge and technology, is a key driver of economic growth, productivity, structural transformation and sustainable development. Among the capabilities that developing countries need to generate in order to harness science, technology and innovation (STI) for development, sound policymaking frameworks leading to the establishment of effective innovation systems are key. While this is recognized by the Governments of many developing countries, designing and implementing national science, technology and innovation strategies and policies present considerable challenges for many of them. There is a clear need to support a process of science, technology and innovation policy learning, experimentation and the dissemination of good practices.

48. **Objectives and features.** The science, technology and innovation policy review programme provides policy advice to countries requesting assistance in building and maintaining a dynamic and responsive science, technology and innovation framework that can foster technological capabilities, create effective innovation systems, facilitate technology acquisition and improve national innovation performance. It aims to ensure that national science, technology and innovation programmes become an instrument for supporting the national development agenda and promoting sustainable development. The reviews assess the strengths and weaknesses of a country's innovation systems, including the policy framework, institutions, capabilities, and innovation effort as well as performance. Reviews generally include an analysis of the technology and innovation challenges and opportunities in specific industries (such as agriculture, textiles, oil and gas or pharmaceuticals) or issue areas of high priority for the beneficiary country (such as information and communications technology, biotechnology, human capital and energy). Key science, technology and innovation issues that affect the productivity and competitiveness of industries are identified. The reviews include recommendations for action to revamp policy frameworks, including policies, regulations, measures and practices that can improve technological and innovation capacity, increase investment in innovative activity, raise productivity and upgrade firm and industry competitiveness. The primary beneficiaries of the reviews are the major players in the national innovation system, such as policymakers (from science and technology ministries or similar bodies, trade and industry ministries and other ministries of importance to science, technology and innovation), the

business community, academic and research institutions, civil society and development and sustainability interest groups with a role in science, technology and innovation, in particular those related to any specific areas to be adopted as a focus for a review.

49. **Outputs.** The *Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Review of Uganda* was published in October 2020 and UNCTAD agreed with the Government of Uganda to implement follow-up activities. Based on the assessment provided in the review, UNCTAD is supporting the development of a national policy framework for STI. A draft STI policy was delivered in March 2021. Trainings will be delivered to all levels of governments using the STI Policy Review. The Government expects that dissemination of knowledge on STI will be conducive to the country's efforts in using STI to achieve economic growth, social development, and environment protection as well as gender equality and empowerment.⁹

50. After the *Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Review of Ethiopia* was published in March 2020, Ethiopia embarked on the road to formulate, with advisory support from UNCTAD, the country's new STI policy, based on the findings and recommendations of the STI Policy Review. For this purpose, the Government set up a drafting committee. It is noteworthy that the STI policy review examined the use of STI in the textiles and apparels industry, which is the main foreign exchange earner of Ethiopia, as well as the pharmaceutical industry. Both industries are identified as high priorities of the national development plan.¹⁰

51. The STI policy review for the Dominican Republic, undertaken at the request of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, was published in April 2021. The analysis was largely based on the findings of an UNCTAD mission in November/December 2019 as well as virtual meetings organized in 2020. During the mission in 2019, over 80 meetings were held with representatives of major sectors participating in the national system of innovation. A first draft of the document was reviewed in five workshops with stakeholders in 2020. Abundant feedback was received that allowed fine-tuning of the analysis and recommendations. In the process and based on the analysis of the STI policy review, UNCTAD was able to contribute inputs to the national competitiveness plans that the Government undertook in 2020. Potential follow-up capacity-building activities are under consideration by the Government of the Dominican Republic.

52. The main recommendations of the STI policy review for the Dominican Republic address three sets of issues: (i) raising awareness of the importance of STI for development; (ii) fostering an effective governance system that promotes active government, private sector and civil society participation; and (iii) building a more effective allocation of resources to promote STI.

53. The STI policy review production process was in full activity during the reporting period despite difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic prevented most international travel and in-person meetings and, as a result, several missions were cancelled while consultations and capacity-building activities were moved online. This has led to a rethinking about adapting future activities by using online tools and platforms, alongside in-person events, in a hybrid delivery mode. Such changes are necessary in order to respond to country requests and assists policymakers in maximizing the contribution of STI to the socioeconomic challenges of the post-COVID recovery.

54. The STI policy review for Zambia was launched in late 2019, and work continued in 2020. A complete working draft was delivered in May 2021. Consultations for adjustments will continue throughout 2021 while publication is foreseen for autumn 2021. The review provides perspectives on the national system of innovation of Zambia. It also discusses, in greater detail, the role and contribution of STI in Zambia for digital transformation, gender equality, a functional food system and the mining sector. The STI policy review highlights the need to raise STI Policy to the highest level in national development planning and how this will require greater efforts in capacity-building for STI policy design and

⁹ The STI policy review report for Uganda is available at <https://unctad.org/webflyer/science-technology-and-innovation-policy-review-uganda>.

¹⁰ The STI policy review report for Ethiopia is available at <https://unctad.org/webflyer/science-technology-and-innovation-policy-review-ethiopia>.

implementation. The analysis in the review will serve to develop capacity-building for policymakers in Zambia targeted for online delivery in the fourth quarter of 2021.

55. The STI policy review for Botswana commenced in mid-2020 and is under way. It is planned to be finalized by December 2021. The uniqueness of this review is that this is the first STI policy review in Africa that is fully funded by the beneficiary country. The review is expected to help the country reap the great potential of STI in transforming the country from a natural resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, as outlined in its Vision 2036.

56. These STI policy reviews and related trainings improved the capacity of public and private stakeholders to assess their national STI capacities, with a view to identifying gaps and incoherencies in policies, and to identify priority actions. Especially through participating in the review and follow up activities, policymakers in these countries enhanced their capacity to design and implement coherent science, technology and innovation policies that align with the overall development strategies of countries for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

57. In order to reinforce the capacitybuilding delivered through STI policy reviews, UNCTAD offers officials and policymakers from countries undergoing STI policy reviews multiple training opportunities on STI policy for the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, a series of online training on STI and the Sustainable Development Goals was held between November and December 2020. The training workshops were co-led by UNCTAD and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the Inter-agency Task Team, an operational arm of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM). This activity was open among others to current and former African STI policy review countries. The participants found the training helpful for them to review, design and implement STI policy and to conduct STI for the Sustainable Development Goal case studies.

58. Enhancing scientific research capabilities in developing countries is essential for the sustainability of their STI systems. UNCTAD and the University of Okayama (Japan) launched in November 2020 a Young Female Scientist Programme with a focus on African countries. Once international travel conditions improve subsequent to the alleviation of the COVID-19 pandemic, six young female scientists from Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia and Madagascar will conduct cutting-edge research in their respective fields of sciences in Japan for brief periods and bring back home their experiences to contribute to their countries' research and development. They will also have an opportunity to improve their access to research networks in their specialities. Most of the participating scientists have chosen health-related research, including health sciences; medicine, dentistry and pharmaceutical sciences; environmental and life science; natural science and technology; and interdisciplinary science and engineering in health systems. These are key areas to address COVID-19 challenges, but also important for the implementation of national development plans. The program will contribute to building human capital in science, technology and innovation-related fields in these countries and closing the gender gap through gender equality and empowerment in scientific research.

59. **Results.** As at the end of 2020, UNCTAD had completed science, technology and innovation policy reviews in 17 countries, in which they had often ignited a renewal in science, technology and innovation policy, raised its profile in national development strategies and facilitated the inclusion of related activities in international cooperation plans. A key feature of the reviews is the systematic effort made to involve a broad range of stakeholders. This participatory process can mobilize networks of actors towards transformation through policy experimentation and learning. These activities under the STI policy reviews have enabled policymakers and other STI stakeholders in these countries to reach a better understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses in their STI systems, policies, institutions and capacities, and identify strategic priorities and policy options for improving STI capacity and becoming more innovative.

60. For example, in Ethiopia, the STI policy review was a catalyst for the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) to promote several rounds of capacity-building on STI Policy for governments officials of MInT, other relevant Ministries and State and local

innovation agencies. The successful conclusion of the STI policy review also triggered the request by MINTEC for UNCTAD to support the formulation of the new STI policy of Ethiopia, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the STI policy review. Redrafting of the national STI policy is ongoing. Through the homegrown economic reform and the 10-year strategy, Ethiopia aims to become a middle-income economy. Innovation and technology are key drivers for attaining this goal and the Government has indicated that the STI policy review process has helped the Government to move towards this objective. In Panama the recommendation made in the STI policy review to revive the inter-ministerial committee on STI was implemented within weeks of the document being shared with the Government. The National Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation has indicated that the outcome of the STI policy review will be a major input to the STI policy revision currently under way in the country.

A5 E-commerce and the digital economy

Table A5

E-commerce and the digital economy

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
BOT/0T/HBM	ICT Policy Review: National E-commerce Strategy for Botswana	2018–	Botswana
IRQ/0T/HCM	Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment of Iraq	2019–	International Islamic Trade Finance
IVC/0T/IBA	eTrade Readness Assessment of Côte d'Ivoire	2020–	Germany
KIR/0T/HCI	Rapid eTrade readiness assessments of the least developed countries – Kiribati, EIF	2018–	United Nations Office for Project Services, Switzerland
MYI/0T/IAT	EIF – Myanmar E-commerce Strategy	2019–	United Nations Office for Project Services, Switzerland
INT/0T/FAQ	eTrade for all coordination	2016–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/GAT	Rapid eTrade readiness assessments, EIF	2018–	Germany
INT/0T/HAT	Information and communications technology policies for development, German Agency for International Cooperation	2018–	Germany
INT/0T/HCE	Strategic partnership Netherlands (linked to INT/0T/HCJ)	2018–	Netherlands
INT/0T/IBN	E-commerce and the Digital Economy (ECDE) for Development – BMZ	2019–	Germany
RAF/0T/HCC	Africa E-commerce Week	2018–	Germany
ROA-1819 (N11)	Leapfrogging skills development in e-commerce in South-East Asia in the	2018–	Development Account

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
	framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development		

61. **Development context.** E-commerce and, more generally, the rise of the digital economy, are rapidly transforming the way in which enterprises are interacting with each other, consumers and Governments. Digitalization is creating new opportunities for technological leaps, productivity gains across the economy, the rise of new sectors and more trade. At the same time, the transformation is raising new challenges and costs for countries. The importance of digital solutions was further enhanced in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, the considerable divides in terms of connectivity and the ability to harness digital opportunities became even more evident. The evolution of the digital economy calls for unconventional economic thinking and policy analysis. Policymakers need to make choices that can help reverse current trends towards widening inequalities and power imbalances wrought by the digital economy. This involves the adaptation of existing policies, laws and regulations, and the adoption of new ones. While some issues can be addressed through national policies and strategies, the global nature of the digital economy will require more dialogue, consensus-building and policymaking at the international level. Many developing countries need to establish legal, institutional and policy frameworks, as well as effective national strategies, to leverage the dynamism of e-commerce and digitalization for value creation and capture. It is also important to improve the availability of relevant statistics needed for the design of sound policies and to learn from best practices in securing development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy. Special efforts are also needed to ensure that women have equal opportunities in e-commerce and the digital economy.

62. The Nairobi Maafikiano led to the establishment of the annual Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy and subsequently to the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy. UNCTAD was given a stronger mandate to position itself as an important enabler and a centre of excellence for leveraging e-commerce and the digital economy for sustainable development. With the launch of the eTrade for all initiative, the annual multi-stakeholder E-commerce Week, including at the regional level, the development of eTrade Readiness Assessments as well as the eTrade for Women initiative, UNCTAD has continued to show leadership in the area of e-commerce and the digital economy for development through its three pillars of work: research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation. During 2020, the work on e-commerce and the digital economy had to be adapted due to the pandemic but most objectives were still achieved.

63. **Objectives and features.** The e-commerce and digital economy programme ultimately aims to improve the ability of people in developing countries, in particular LDCs, to reap inclusive and sustainable development gains from e-commerce and the digital economy. This should be achieved through improved decision-making and policy formulation in member States and development partners on e-commerce and the digital economy for development, in a gender sensitive manner; and improved efficiency among member States, development partners, international organizations, civil society and the private sector in addressing issues and providing assistance on e-commerce and the digital economy for development.

64. **Outputs.** In 2020, extrabudgetary funding contributed to the production and dissemination of several research products. New global estimates of e-commerce were published as a technical note in April 2020. A survey of consumers in nine developed and developing countries was conducted to examine the impact of COVID-19 on e-commerce. A second survey was also conducted of e-commerce businesses in 23 countries, mainly in Africa and Asia. Moreover, under auspices of the eTrade for all initiative, a major global review was undertaken in collaboration with United Nations regional commissions and other partners to assess the impact of the pandemic on e-commerce in different parts of the world (published in February 2021). Extrabudgetary funding also contributed to the UNCTAD business-to-consumer e-commerce index 2020 (presented in February 2021).

A technical note entitled “Digital economy growth and mineral resources: Implications for developing countries” was also prepared.

65. The UNCTAD E-commerce Week has become the leading global forum at which public and private stakeholders, as well as civil society, can engage in dialogues about the development implications of the digital economy. The annual 2020 edition, which was scheduled to take place between 27 April to 1 May 2020, was organized in a virtual format, called eWeek, and saw the participation of more than 2,000 participants from 136 countries. Fourteen sessions, including four at a high level, were organized with the active involvement of 14 eTrade for all partners. The event looked in depth at key digital issues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its possible economic impacts, including data, gender, trade and logistics, consumer trust, consumer protection, competition and digital entrepreneurship. New data on global e-commerce sales and the state of cyberlaws were also released.

66. The work on developing a national e-commerce strategy for Botswana, Myanmar and Rwanda continued, all of which should be completed in 2021. Preparatory work also began on similar strategies for Benin and Kenya, as well as for a regional e-commerce strategy of ECOWAS. This is indicative of the rapidly expanding demand from member States.

67. In the framework of the work on e-commerce and law reform, UNCTAD organized two online training sessions for the Government of Guatemala on e-commerce and development, and on e-transaction laws, respectively. UNCTAD also received a request to assist the Government of Kazakhstan in the area of e-commerce and law reform.

68. The global database on cyberlaws (the cyberlaw tracker) developed in 2015 was updated in 2020 in time for the UNCTAD virtual eWeek 2020.

69. The eTrade for all initiative, acts as both an information-hub and global helpdesk to developing countries on e-commerce related issues, as well as a catalyst for building synergies across its partners. As a global help desk, it offers digests, news, events and a new COVID-19 repository page to help developing countries bridge the knowledge gap on e-commerce and related issues. Thanks to several outreach activities to grow the institutional partners membership of the initiative, since the end of 2019, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Commonwealth Secretariat have officially joined the partnership, bringing the total number of partners to 32. Members were offered regular opportunities to bring their expertise to the forefront of the global debate, including in the first virtual eWeek. Regular development and content management work on the online platform have also benefited from extrabudgetary funding. As a result, the platform experienced a 123 per cent year-on-year growth in 2020, reaching 80,000 visitors in 2020, of which 60 per cent from developing countries. The initiative continued to issue a monthly newsletter offering relevant insights and a snapshot of partners’ agenda in the various policy areas and their relevant main policy priorities. The eTrade for all initiative also acts as a catalyst of partnership among its members, offering a regular platform for exchange and create synergies to enhance efficiency and transparency of interventions. In 2020, eTrade for all partners engaged in the first research-oriented joint project resulting in the production on the global report on the impact of COVID-19 on e-commerce and digital trade.

70. In 2020, with the support of the Government of Germany, the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), and the Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), UNCTAD published new eTrade Readiness Assessments with concrete policy recommendations for five LDCs (Benin, Malawi, Mali, the Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania) and two non-LDCs (Côte d’Ivoire and Iraq).

71. Moving from assessment to implementation, UNCTAD started applying its new Implementation Support Strategy in 2020, which rests on a monitoring methodology providing evidence on progress in implementing effectively recommendations emerging from the eTrade readiness assessments, according to countries’ priorities. As a result, UNCTAD undertook a comprehensive review of the implementation of the recommendations in 18 countries, mostly LDCs, and published the report “Fast-tracking implementation of eTrade readiness assessments”, which serves as a powerful tool to guide

stakeholders' engagement at the country level to accelerate e-commerce enabling reforms and investment projects.

72. The digitalization of the economy is creating new business opportunities for women. Yet this potential is far from fully exploited. Women still face many obstacles to scale up their business or to get a seat at decision-making tables. The eTrade for Women initiative launched by UNCTAD in 2019, combines the transformative power of female entrepreneurship with the positive impact of digital technologies. The initiative supports women digital entrepreneurs who are shaping the digital ecosystems in developing and transition economies to thrive as business leaders, and who are emerging as influential voices in the policy debate. This is done through a core network of successful women digital entrepreneurs, the eTrade for Women Advocates, targeted empowerment activities, Masterclasses, and support to build eTrade for Women Communities.

73. During 2020, the UNCTAD Manual for the Production on Statistics on the Digital Economy was updated and presented to the second meeting of the Working Group on Measuring E-commerce and the Digital Economy (3–4 May 2021). This will serve as the basis for the technical assistance to be provided to member States in the area of measuring e-commerce and the digital economy.

74. **Results.** The ongoing work of UNCTAD on e-commerce and the digital economy continued to raise considerable interest among donors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Additional funding was secured from Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea and Sweden, and Switzerland pledged to become a core donor to the work programme in 2021.

75. The UNCTAD secretariat received many new requests from member States for capacity-building activities. The number of participants at the virtual eWeek exceeded 2,000 as compared with 1,500 at the E-commerce Week in 2019. Moreover, the number of partners of the eTrade for all initiative has increased considerably since its creation in 2016. As at December 2020, 32 partners from the public sector and civil society had subscribed to the collective vision of supporting developing countries on their journey to e-commerce for development, while championing successful initiatives.

76. In 2020, 48 women digital entrepreneurs from 11 countries across South-East Asia and Africa participated in an eTrade for Women Masterclass. Participants have been able to boost their capacities to sustain their businesses and positively impact their communities in challenging COVID-19 times. In their feedback, participants highlighted the relevance of the topics addressed and the need to build bridges to support women digital entrepreneurs. The Masterclasses paved the way for the creation of the eTrade for Women Regional Communities, network of women digital entrepreneurs interacting with like-minded peers in order to push down barriers for women entrepreneurship in the digital economy. In November 2020, the first community was established in Francophone West Africa with 17 women digital entrepreneurs from seven countries: Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, followed by a second community in South-East Asia, with 16 members from Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

77. In terms of supporting more inclusive and gender-responsive digital ecosystems, a series of formal policy dialogues and consultations between policymakers and women entrepreneurs were organized at the local, regional and global level, such as in Côte d'Ivoire (February 2020), at the UNCTAD E-commerce Week (April 2020), and as part of the virtual masterclasses organized for Eastern Africa (July 2020) and for South-East Asia (October 2020). These interactions helped to inform policy and regulatory processes about the challenges encountered by small and medium digital businesses, including women-led businesses, and have allowed to identify good practices and opportunities of collaboration between the public sector and digital businesses. The eTrade for Women Advocates engaged in 2020 in numerous high-level events, such as the World Summit Information Society Forum (WSIS), the World Medium and Small Enterprises Day, the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the E-commerce Conference of North Macedonia and at the ECOWAS Forum on e-commerce. They shared their experience with a wide range of stakeholders and contributed to increasing the visibility of the eTrade for Women initiative while drawing attention to

the need to make the digital economy more gender-inclusive, in line with Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 8.

78. The rapid eTrade readiness assessments contributed to raising awareness on e-commerce in the beneficiary countries. The 27 assessments conducted for LDCs and two non-LDCs have confirmed that the countries are inadequately prepared to capture the many opportunities emerging from the digital economy. Given the cross-cutting nature of e-commerce, better synergies and cooperation between development partners and Governments are needed to accompany the implementation of the recommendations contained in the assessments. In this context, UNCTAD has adapted the methodology of the eTrade readiness assessments to better respond to the needs of requesting countries – setting up national committees linked to the assessments, increasing consultations with Governments and strengthening synergies with development partners and digital programmes on the ground. The official launches of the eTrade readiness assessment are also providing a policy platform for Governments, private sector representatives and development partners to discuss digital priorities and prepare a road map towards the implementation of the policy actions recommended.

79. The report, “Fast-tracking implementation of eTrade readiness assessments”, found that all 18 LDCs, at varying speeds, had made use of the assessments by turning recommendations into concrete actions. The overall implementation rate was at 50 percent. The assessments had triggered the development of national e-commerce strategies, which have been adopted in Cambodia, Nepal and Senegal, are in the process of being finalized (e.g. Myanmar and Zambia) or are pending assistance from development partners. Such strategies help to promote public-private dialogue, policy coordination and support for the inclusion of e-commerce in countries’ overall development plans, including in the context of regional integration processes. ECOWAS and the EAC in Africa, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in the Pacific, have built on eTrade readiness assessments to trigger requests and engage new processes for the development of national and regional e-commerce strategies. The analysis also suggested that four policy areas received the greatest attention by countries: payment solutions, ICT infrastructure and services, legal and regulatory frameworks, and trade facilitation and logistics. These areas featured an implementation rate of the eTrade ready recommendations of above 50 per cent. Relevant country experiences in these areas include Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nepal, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia.

A6 Investment guides

Table A6
Investment guides

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/H CJ	Strategic Partnership the Netherlands	2018–	Netherlands

80. **Development context.** The investment guides (iGuides) programme provides developing country Governments with the necessary capacity to better market their countries or territories as investment destinations to the global investment community, in order to attract quality FDI in pursuit of their development goals.

81. **Objectives and features.** The iGuides online platforms, designed by UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce, provide international investors with essential up-to-date information on rules, economic conditions, procedures, business costs and investment opportunities in developing countries. The platforms are developed jointly with beneficiary Governments, at their request. Content includes the following:

(a) Locally available costs. In addition to taxes, social contributions or the state of infrastructure, iGuides provide indicative price ranges regarding wages, rents, consumer

goods and transportation costs. This hard-to-find information enables investors to build a basic business model for their projects.

(b) Relevant licences, procedures and useful contacts. iGuides platforms give an overview of procedures and licences required to start a business, obtain work permits, acquire land, clear imported goods or repatriate funds. Contact persons are also identified in the most useful institutions and offices. iGuides can integrate seamlessly with existing eRegulations systems to provide full information on start-up and business procedures.

(c) Experiences of established investors. Whether the topic is paying taxes, hiring labour or obtaining electricity, iGuides platforms summarize the experiences of established investors and provide case studies of their investment history.

82. During a project, UNCTAD creates a national iGuides platform for the country and trains the government staff assigned to the project in researching and compiling the necessary information and entering it into the system. Once completed, an official launch is organized in the country, and the platform is made publicly available to investors. At the end of project implementation, the beneficiary country has its own iGuides platform and trained staff to administer and update it under the continuous guidance of UNCTAD. The iGuides online platforms replace the previous practice of publishing printed investment guides. It is essential that the new iGuides allow information to be kept up to date by Governments and may be accomplished in a third of the time and at half of the cost.

83. **Outputs.** In February 2020, UNCTAD launched the iGuide to Barbados. It marks the sixth Caribbean country or territory to get an iGuide (others launched are Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Curaçao). Work was under way for iGuide for Saint Kitts and Turks and Caicos Islands; however, activities ground to a halt due to COVID-19. These guides are expected to be completed in 2021. In addition, a Caribbean investment portal is being prepared and is expected to be launched in 2021. In the African region, work on an iGuide for Cameroon, in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, was postponed and will also resume in 2021.

84. **Results.** iGuides are web-based, and any element may be easily updated at any time to reflect changes in legislation, infrastructure, costs or taxes. iGuides therefore remain relevant and useful to their audience. In addition, Governments (not UNCTAD) are responsible for researching, inputting and updating data based on information standards and training provided by UNCTAD and the International Chamber of Commerce. The iGuide launches enjoy high-level participation and receive extensive press coverage. Governments have updated their sites, showing retained capacity to update the website in an effective manner and the continued relevance of the website. The availability of online training allows staff working on iGuides to more easily transfer knowledge and capacity to their peers.

A7 Non-tariff measures

Table A7
Non-tariff measures

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
GHA/OT/HBC	Sector project trade and investment for sustainable development	2018–	Germany
MYA/OT/HBI	United Nations Inter-Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity, Myanmar	2019–	United Nations Office for Project Services, Switzerland
INT/9X/00J	Development and dissemination of selected computerized trade data	2000–	Multi-donors

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/CBG	Non-tariff measures trust fund (under Transparency in Trade programme)	2013–	World Bank
INT/OT/IAQ ^a	NTM data update and conversion for selected APEC economies	2019– 2020	Public donation - National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan
INT/OT/JAY	NTM data update for selected APEC economies	2020–	National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan
RAF/OT/HBT	AfCFTA support programme to eliminate non-tariff barriers, increase regulatory transparency and promote industrial diversification	2018–	Germany
RAS/OT/HAQ	Transparency in trade regulation and facilitation in Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus	2018–	Australia, New Zealand
ROA-1617 (A10)	Programme on statistics and data	2016–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (X12)	Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics	2020–	Development Account

^a Operationally but not financially completed or fully completed in 2020.

85. **Development context.** Regulations, including behind-the-border regulations protecting safety, health and the environment, affect 90 per cent of merchandise trade. Such non-tariff measures are policy measures, other than customs tariffs, which often have an impact on international trade in terms of quantities traded or prices. These measures, although mostly legislated with non-protectionist and non-discriminating intents, can have important implications for international trade in terms of both increasing trade costs and the effects of trade diversion. Non-tariff measures affect trade by raising trade, compliance and procedural costs, which often disproportionately burden small enterprises and poorer countries. LDCs and smaller producers in developing countries are disproportionately affected, hampering trade and economic development. However, most non-tariff measures have important public policy objectives such as protecting health, safety and the environment. More than 40 per cent of non-tariff measures are directly and positively linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Striking a balance between trade costs and regulatory benefits requires transparency, policy coherence and international-level regulatory convergence. Concrete actions in this regard are often coupled with regional economic integration and domestic regulatory reforms. Over 140 countries resorted to the use of non-tariff measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, both to facilitate and to restrict international trade. While many of these measures were put in place for legitimate policy objectives, such as ensuring access to or safety of essential goods, they impacted sustainable development. For developing countries, understanding the uses and implications of such measures is essential for the formulation and implementation of effective development strategies.

86. **Objectives and features.** The UNCTAD programme on non-tariff measures aims to increase transparency and understanding of trade control measures and regulations so that policies can better promote sustainable development. The programme covers the entire chain of non-tariff measures, ranging from classification,¹¹ data collection and dissemination, to research, policy advice and capacity-building in countries and regional integration groupings. UNCTAD leads international cooperation (working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the International Trade Centre, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization) on the development and revision of the International Classification of Non-Tariff Measures and with regional and international partners (African Development Bank, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, International Trade Centre, Latin American Integration Association, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Southern African Development Community (SADC), World Bank and WTO) on data collection. This ensures a globally coordinated and resource-saving approach. UNCTAD assists developing countries and countries with economies in transition in enhancing transparency and building analytical capacity on non-tariff measures by the following means: collecting and making available online data on such measures to enhance transparency in this regard; conducting regional reviews of the integration of non-tariff measures; providing online and in-country training on data collection on non-tariff measures and on data sources, tools, methods and policy-relevant research questions on such measures; and providing advisory services upon request to countries and regional groupings in building capacities to address such measures and remove non-tariff barriers.

87. **Outputs.** UNCTAD delivered the following in 2020:

(a) Receiving approval of agencies of the international cooperation for the revised and extended International Classification of Non-Tariff Measures, including now a detailed taxonomy for government procurement, intellectual property, rules of origin and subsidies. In March 2019, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the International Classification of Non-Tariff Measures for data collection across countries and for reporting on internationally comparable data on non-tariff measures. In 2020, the related guidelines for data collection were published.

(b) Data on non-tariff measures for some 20 countries were updated or newly collected. The UNCTAD database on non-tariff measures, the Trade Analysis and Information System, is the world's largest and most comprehensive, covering 90 per cent of world trade, and data on non-tariff measures are publicly available through the dissemination tool TRAINS Portal for non-tariff measures (for policy makers), the World Integrated Trade Solutions platform (for researchers) and the Global Trade Helpdesk (for private sector users);¹² TRAINS Portal (<https://trainsonline.unctad.org>) aims to strengthen the transparency of non-tariff measures across countries and reduce access to information cost of traders. It is an interactive web portal that allows public users to benefit from efficient search queries, data compilation, data retrieval, as well as download customized search results. Non-tariff measures and trade regulation data on TRAINS Portal are retrieved from the newly developed TRAINS Data Entry Tool (<https://dataentry.trains.unctad.org/>), where data from over 109 countries have been collected using a standardized approach that ensures cross-country comparability.

(c) Capacity-building activities conducted through online training and face-to-face workshops on non-tariff measures. In response to the special circumstance of 2020, the sixth and seventh editions of the online course on non-tariff measures and data collection were modified to reflect both the relevance of non-tariff measures and the coronavirus

¹¹ Classification focuses on the identification of policies and regulations that determine trade and market access and how information about non-tariff measures can be structured.

¹² See <https://trains.unctad.org>.

pandemic. Two hundred seventy-six participants (135 women and 141 men) from around 70 countries joined the courses from 15 June to 10 July 2020 and 5 October to 30 October 2020. Over 90 per cent of participants believed that the knowledge acquired during the online course helped them understand non-tariff measures and the policy issues that their country faces in international trade, especially during the time of the pandemic. Four region-specific online courses were finalized for government officials from 9 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam (July 2019–February 2020). Face-to-face training sessions were conducted in Africa, Asia and Latin America and in economies in transition.

(d) UNCTAD continued to support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement in the implementation of the AfCFTA Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) online reporting, monitoring and eliminating mechanism. On <https://tradebarriers.africa>, traders can report an NTB affecting intra-African trade. The online tool is inclusive to micro, small and medium-sized companies, informal traders, and youth and women business operators. It enhances transparency and gives equal voice to all stakeholders, small or large. To resolve NTBs, governments have appointed national NTB focal points. In 2020, these officials received further training by UNCTAD and the African Union (virtual inter-governmental workshop on 17–18 June; followed by many additional country-specific coaching sessions) in the use of the online tool. The focal points receive NTB complaints in real time and are mandated under the AfCFTA to resolve the barriers within the set deadlines. Communication and exchange of relevant documents is facilitated through the online tool. The online tool also translates communication from 16 African languages into the official languages of the African Union. To raise awareness among the private sector, UNCTAD and the African Union ran a social media campaign, organized six subregional webinars, and a continental training event with 172 participants (21 October, virtual). To further improve inclusiveness of the mechanism and allow participation of traders without internet connectivity, UNCTAD also supported the development of a feature that allows NTB reporting via text message (SMS). The feature was discussed with AfCFTA member States on 16 December and 20 member States expressed their interest in participating in the pilot phase.

(e) Twelve AfCFTA member States (Comoros, Eswatini, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo) have requested UNCTAD support on increasing regulatory transparency through NTM data collection and dissemination. Increasing transparency are a horizontal objective of the AfCFTA and has significant potential to reducing the costs of NTMs. This work builds on and extends previous data collection efforts in ECOWAS (2014–2015) and the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite region (2015–2020). UNCTAD assistance on NTM data collection and transparency also aims to foster inter-agency collaboration between various ministries to improve policy coherence (Sustainable Development Goal 17.14, indicator 17.14.1).

(f) UNCTAD continued support for nine SIDS signatories in the Pacific (Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Niue) to build their capacity to fulfil transparency commitments under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus. Most activities were conducted vis-à-vis the Cook Islands, which had put the project on hold until the late 2019. In line with the assistance provided to other SIDS signatories in 2019, a legislation tab, developed for the non-tariff measure component of the project, was integrated into the Cook Islands' Trade Information Portal (<https://cook-islands.tradeportal.org/Regulations/Index?lang=undefined>). Also, UNCTAD provided training on the substance of the PACER Plus commitments and how to use the legislation tab, as well as assisted in the organization of national contact points. Based on the gap analysis of regulatory framework, UNCTAD supported the Cook Islands to collect and publish laws and regulations that are related to trade in goods and services. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCTAD replaced face-to-face workshops with virtual weekly meetings and virtual workshops. On 13 August, UNCTAD held a virtual national validation workshop with the Cook Islands where 6 out of 17 participants were female. Moreover, on 25 November, UNCTAD held a virtual closing regional forum with all SIDS signatories, donors, an external evaluator and partner agencies who are/will be

conducting development activities in the region. The closing forum provided an opportunity to present the project's achievements and recapitulate training materials as well as to share countries' experiences and discuss next steps. Lastly, UNCTAD responded to ad hoc requests of the signatories.

(g) Support for regional integration and economic development in ASEAN, working with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia and the ESCAP. Training on non-tariff measures and good regulatory practices for the region were conducted in Brunei Darussalam (10–11 February 2020), and Malaysia (13–14 February, 2020). Under a United Nations Trade Cluster Project for Trade and Productive Capacity in Myanmar, a review of technical NTMs of Myanmar on select products with respect to NTMs in potential export markets was carried out to identify opportunities and challenges for market access. The study also entails a detailed analysis of technical regulations in potential export markets. Workshops and capacity-building trainings for key sectors of Government and the private sector have been planned.

(h) A Non-Tariff Measures Cost-Effectiveness Toolkit was developed to provide policymakers with a framework and tools to evaluate national NTMs. The toolkit analyses NTMs in terms of the objective they are designed for, the manner in which they are implemented, and how easy it is for the private sector to comply with them. Designed to review NTMs applicable to intermediate inputs for a value chain of national economic and political interest, the toolkit targets increasing competitiveness in the identified sector and creation of regional value chains (RVCs). The toolkit was piloted in the Kenyan cotton and textiles sector in collaboration with the Ministry of East African Community Affairs and Regional Development. Discussions. Further implementation is planned across ASEAN.

(i) In close cooperation with UNECE and UNESCAP transparency in East Europe and Central Asia has been increased. Non-tariff measures data are available for all Eurasian Economic Union countries as well as for Azerbaijan. Validation workshops were conducted with these governments (Kazakhstan, 16 November). Data collection for Georgia and the development of a national e-NTM platform started with UNECE in 2020.

88. **Results.** Based on a Heads of State mandate, the project led by UNCTAD and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia significantly increased transparency in non-tariff measures in the ASEAN region. The forty-ninth meeting of ASEAN economic ministers (7–10 September 2017) recognized the UNCTAD–Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia data and dissemination portal as a foundation to address non-tariff measures and mandated a regular review of the database.¹³ The ASEAN Ministers thanked the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia and UNCTAD for the work developing the non-tariff measures database and the in-country trainings on NTMs collection, classification and analysis at the fifty-first meeting of economic ministers (9 September 2019). The data is “a good resource in assisting ASEAN Member States in populating and developing the NTMs section of their National Trade Repositories (NTRs)”. Furthermore, the data has been used in the implementation of customs single windows in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam. ASEAN members are using the joint data to explore possibilities for harmonizing non-tariff measures in ASEAN. Malaysia is using the data for a cost-benefit assessment to streamline national regulations, and other countries have requested UNCTAD support in this area. NTM data were updated for Viet Nam in 2020, and discussed with the Government with a view to including this officially in a trade portal that is going to be built with United Kingdom cooperation.

89. The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus entered into force on 13 December 2020 as eight out of 11 signatories (Australia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Cook Islands and Niue) ratified the agreement. Over 130 pieces of laws and regulations that are related to not only trade in goods and services, but also business and foreign direct investment are now publicly available with detailed explanation in the Trade Information Portal of the Cook Islands. Collection of regulatory information also contributed to identifying and clarifying mistakes and

¹³ See <http://asean.i-tip.org>.

confusions regarding the Cook Islands regulatory system, as well as highlighting the needs for legislation consolidation, which was conducted lastly in 1990s. In regard of the national validation workshop, 94 per cent of the participants who responded to the assessment found it “Good” or “Excellent”. Also, in the closing regional forum, 100 per cent of participants who responded to the assessment “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “the project responded well to my country’s needs in trade-related regulatory transparency”. The project is extended until June 2021 at no additional cost.

90. After the ceremonial launch at the African Union Summit on 7 July 2019 and subsequent training of national focal points, the AfCFTA NTB online reporting, monitoring and eliminating mechanism went “live” on 13 January 2020. A first few NTBs were reported, and the resolution **process** was initiated by national focal points. Outreach activities reached and trained over 1500 stakeholders and private sector operators. The NTB mechanism was also picked up and discussed on television and in major newspapers. A social media campaign also increased website visits by 250 per cent.

91. The Latin American Integration Association is continuing to promote trade through the continuous provision of updated information on non-tariff measures to policymakers, exporters and importers, based on UNCTAD methodology and technical support. Southern Common Market countries are revitalizing their efforts towards deep economic integration, including based on an UNCTAD regional non-tariff measures integration review providing background data on and an analysis of non-tariff measures.

92. The dissemination of research results on non-tariff measures has improved awareness of the importance of non-tariff measures for international trade and export-led development strategies and of the need to devise policies to minimize the negative effects of non-tariff measures. In particular, transparency on non-tariff measures was increased through the collection and dissemination of data and through a series of studies that helped to provide better understanding of the implications of these measures for developing countries. A milestone was the research and launch of the joint ESCAP and UNCTAD Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019 which sheds light on the close link between non-tariff measures and the Sustainable Development Goals and which was used in many capacity-building activities in 2020. Due to the consistent and standardized global methodology for data collection, the resulting data can be used to assess the different countries’ use of these tools as policies, shedding light on its importance and incidence in everyday life. A document explains the statistical procedures to use the data for quantitative analysis.

93. The TRAINS Data Entry Tool since its release in July 2020, has been used in data collection and update of non-tariff measures and trade regulations for over 10 countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The new tool has received strong buy-in from countries including Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Viet Nam, with the support of UNCTAD, in developing a common integration platform that will allow non-tariff measures and trade regulations data collection within these countries, and a secure information exchange channel with TRAINS Portal. These efforts signal the increasing transparency and openness of countries in reducing additional information costs for traders as well as boosting investors’ interest in their markets.

94. The pilot implementation of the Non-Tariff Measures Cost-Effectiveness Toolkit in Kenya brought together private and public sector agencies to discuss challenges associated with NTM design, implementation and compliance on cotton imports. This encouraged a deeper understanding of the potential impact of NTMs on businesses and the need to apply good regulatory practices – something that was well reflected in participants’ evaluation responses. This was followed by a round of face-to-face interviews with all stakeholders. The deployment of the toolkit has culminated into a “Kenya Case Study” which summarizes the key findings and policy recommendations - proposals for the immediate next steps, and the potential partners at the national and international level. These were also discussed during a validation workshop with the Government of Kenya (21 July).

A9 Trade negotiations and the international trading system

Table A9
Trade negotiations and the international trading system

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
MOZ/0T/JAH	Building Competitiveness for Exports in Mozambique	2020–	European Union through United Nations inter-agency agreement with UNIDO
INT/9X/00M	SUPPORT TO THE GSTP	2020–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/HAA ^a	Measurement of services value added in exports and analysis of related services and trade policies	2018– 2020	European Union

^a Operationally but not financially completed or fully completed in 2020.

95. **Development context.** Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that called for revitalizing the global trade partnership in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, and equitable multilateral trading system continues to be the cornerstone of such a partnership, particularly to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 17. While international trade negotiations can open access to new markets, thus creating opportunities, they also represent daunting challenges for policymakers and trade negotiators as new rules and commitments resulting from such negotiations would define a country's participation in international trade. The challenge for developing countries is to design adequate national policies and negotiating strategies that best reflect their national development objectives, and to effectively participate in the negotiations so as to facilitate development-oriented outcomes. Thus, continued and enhanced support on trade negotiations, including in the context of WTO accession, remains critically important for developing countries, particularly for the least developed countries, Africa and small vulnerable economies. Such support would be required particularly for agriculture, food security, domestic support, cotton, non-agricultural market access, non-tariff measures, services market access, domestic regulations, services trade facilitation, services preferences, duty-free and quota-free market access, rules of origin, special and differential treatment and fishery subsidies.

96. Services economy is the new frontier for the expansion of trade, productivity and competitiveness, providing jobs and universal access to essential services. The role of services as inputs into other sectors of the economy is crucial. Infrastructural services such as financial services, telecommunications and ICT services, transport and energy are important for economic diversification and enhancement of domestic supply capacity. The work on services, trade and development is aimed at building the human and institutional capacities of key national stakeholders – including civil society, entrepreneurs, policymakers and trade negotiators – to harness the opportunities arising from strengthening of the services sector and services trade. This includes the effects of services in all sectors that rely on stronger services inputs to increase their productivity and competitiveness. This is important because the integration of developing countries into the global services economy through increased services trade requires them to design and implement appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks, negotiate and manage trade agreements that cover services, establish institutional structures, create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, and build competitive services supply capacities.

UNCTAD work on services is expected to contribute to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 8, Goal 9 and Goal 17.

97. The provision and utilization of trade preferences for LDCs (duty-free quota-free) is a key goal of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, as further reaffirmed in Goal 17.12. At the South–South level, UNCTAD provides technical support to the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP) participants. Following the successful conclusion of the Sao Paulo Round of GSTP negotiations in December 2010, UNCTAD continued to support GSTP participants in their efforts towards effective implementation of the Round and in follow-up discussions. UNCTAD assisted them in coordinating and backstopping their activities in various GSTP activities.

98. **Objective.** UNCTAD provides capacity-building support aimed at helping developing countries, particularly LDCs, and their regional groupings, Africa, small and vulnerable economies, and countries with economies in transition reap benefits and handle challenges in the areas of multilateral and regional trade negotiations, services regulatory and institutional frameworks at the national level, and WTO accession. UNCTAD promotes coherence of bilateral and regional trade agreements with the multilateral trading system; and supports regional cooperation mechanisms as well as utilization of trade preferences. Given the limited progress in the Doha Round and renewed interest in regional trade arrangements, UNCTAD also places greater emphasis on development impact of regional dimension of trade (South–South and South–North).

99. UNCTAD's support in the area of services is aimed to enhance expertise and human, regulatory and institutional capacities to elaborate and implement national services regulatory frameworks, services sectoral assessments and preparations for (a) regional negotiations with a view to developing a regional framework on services trade; (b) participation in WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services negotiations; (c) responding to the challenges associated with parallel negotiations between the multilateral track and regional tracks; and (d) coordinating trade policy negotiations with other policy dimensions to ensure the best policy mix that ensures supply capacity in services for direct and indirect trade. In the context of the latter point, the particular objective of the project on the measurement of services value added in exports and analysis of related services and trade policies is to reduce the knowledge gap in developing countries on measuring services value added in exports and on analysing policies that affect this value added. This should allow for evidence-based policymaking, as aimed at in the Goals, in particular with regard to trade and services-related policies that contribute to efficiency, increased productive and export capacity and greater participation in global value chains.

100. UNCTAD comprehensive work on services includes advisory services on legal, economic and policy issues; support for stakeholder consultations; and support for services negotiations at regional and multilateral levels. These activities are informed by evidence-based research and analysis on such issues as market trends and the economic and legal aspects of the services economy and specific services sectors, regulatory and institutional frameworks, and international trade negotiations. Synergies were created with ongoing analytical and intergovernmental work, especially through the Multi-year Expert Meeting (MYEM) on Trade, Services and Development. The follow-up of meetings and deliberations of the WTO Council for Trade in Services and subsidiary bodies has also been synergic with work in support of services-related objectives of developing countries.

101. The objective of UNCTAD support for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and other preferential arrangements is to help developing countries, in particular LDCs, to increase the utilization of GSP and other trade preferences. Such support includes raising awareness and enhancing understanding among exporters and government officials in beneficiary countries of the trading opportunities available under the schemes; strengthening understanding of technical and administrative regulations and laws governing preferential market access, in particular rules of origin; and disseminating relevant information for users of preferential schemes.

102. The objective of UNCTAD support for GSTP is to increase trade among developing countries by facilitating market access negotiations and the operation of GSTP and benefiting from it, and to provide substantive and administrative support to GSTP participants for them to implement the results of the third round of negotiations.

103. **Outputs.** The main outputs in 2020 in the area of trade negotiations and the international trading system are reported as follows:

Trade negotiations

104. In 2020, UNCTAD made a substantial contribution to African countries in their trade policy formulation and implementation, capacity-building in trade negotiations, and services policy assessment and review.

105. At regional level, UNCTAD pioneered in providing technical and substantive support to pan-African negotiations aimed at the establishment of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) since 2015. UNCTAD support to reaching consensus among African countries was essential in the finalization of AfCFTA Negotiating Modalities for trade in goods and services, as well the text of the Agreement. In cooperation with the African Union Commission, UNCTAD supported African countries in this area in finalizing market access offers and implementing tariff reduction commitments in a manner supportive of their development needs. In 2020, UNCTAD produced a publication entitled “Designing Trade Liberalization in Africa: Modalities for tariff negotiations towards an African Continental Free Trade Area.”

106. UNCTAD continued to monitor and assess the evolution in international trade and the trading system from a development perspective, including those affecting African countries. In 2020, UNCTAD launched a new platform for policy discussion entitled “UNCTAD Trade Policy Dialogue” and promoted focused and candid debate on new and emerging issues affecting developing countries, including Africa. Such discussions were held on the following topics: “The multilateral trading system in the post-pandemic “new normal” (25 September 2020)” organized in cooperation with Organization of the ACP States (OACPS); “Towards model RTA provisions for trade in essential supplies in times of crisis (28 October 2020)”, organized in cooperation with United Nations regional commissions, including United Nations ESCAP and United Nations ECA; and “Elements of a policy mix for trade-led recovery: Services, creative economy, and making the best of trade agreements (16 November 2020)”, which was held in cooperation with the Group of 77 and China, then coordinated by Zambia.

107. At multilateral level, despite the lack of movement among members of the WTO, largely due to rising trade tensions since 2018 and the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, strategic interventions were made to support African countries in multilateral trade negotiations. UNCTAD continued to provide technical support to developing countries and groupings in their engagement in multilateral and regional trade negotiations and the implementation of the resulting trade agreements. Support was provided to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Ambassadors’ and technical experts’ retreat in preparation for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (January 2020) in assessing stakes and issues on agricultural negotiations. Technical support was provided to the five Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) countries (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) in their preparation for ESA5-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) deepening negotiations in the areas of trade and sustainable development and rules of origin. Under the Commercial Diplomacy component of the European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, UNCTAD supported the Ministry of Commerce of Angola in building capacity in trade negotiations, including negotiating techniques, trade data and regional integration. A Virtual Seminar on Negotiating Techniques, Trade Statistics and Regional Integration was organized on 25 November 2020. UNCTAD also intensified efforts to support the Ministry in its engagement in EPA negotiations with the European Union, with a view to preparing the impact study and in-country support to trade negotiating team. UNCTAD successfully launched European Union-UNIDO project to support Mozambique in implementing safeguards, which will be implemented over the period 2021–2023.

108. In 2020, UNCTAD organized or contributed to the following meetings:

(a) UNCTAD-UNIDO advisory meeting on the assistance project to Mozambique in the area of trade safeguards in the context of Mozambique European Union-EPA (4 June 2020 Geneva-Vienna, virtual meeting);

(b) UNCTAD-UNIDO and Ministry of Trade of Mozambique advisory meeting on the launch of the inception phase of the project on the assistance to Mozambique in the area of trade safeguards (Mozambique European Union-EPA) (9 July, Geneva-Vienna-Maputo, virtual meeting);

(c) Advisory support to Eastern and Southern Africa region for Economic Partnership Agreement (17 July, virtual meeting);

(d) Webinar on the Impact of COVID-19 on Regional Integration of Intra-Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Trade and Investment (22 July, virtual meeting);

(e) UNCTAD-UNIDO and Ministry of Trade of Mozambique 2nd advisory meeting on the launch of the inception phase of the project on the assistance to Mozambique in the area of trade safeguards (Mozambique European Union-EPA) (18 August, Geneva-Vienna-Maputo, virtual meeting);

(f) Advisory meeting with Côte d'Ivoire trade officials on the issues of dependence on commodities, price volatility and loss of export earnings (16 October, Geneva, virtual meeting);

(g) UNCTAD-ESCAP webinar on Model Provisions for Trade in Times of Crisis and Pandemic in Regional and other Trade Agreements (28 October, Geneva-Bangkok).

109. UNCTAD assisted more than 20 countries acceding to WTO, including all LDCs negotiating or preparing for accession.¹⁴ UNCTAD technical assistance on WTO accession targets building human resources, regulatory, policy and institutional capacities in WTO acceding countries to deal more effectively with the challenges of the international trading system and take advantage of emerging opportunities as well as to implement their obligations associated with WTO membership. The technical assistance provided by UNCTAD has increased the awareness among the acceding country's negotiating team and stakeholders of the multifaceted issues in the accession process and has enabled them to better understand WTO rules and disciplines, including the special and differential treatment and other developmental provisions. It has therefore enabled them to participate more effectively in the accession negotiations. The programme further assists countries in maintaining coherence between undertakings at multilateral and regional levels including South-South. In 2020, the following activities were undertaken on WTO accession:

(a) Advisory meeting with South Sudan trade officials on WTO accession preparation and requirements (12 February, Geneva – Juba, virtual meeting);

(b) WTO accessions week webinar (29 June – 3 July, Geneva);

(c) High-Level Regional Dialogue: WTO Accession for the Arab Region (10 November, Geneva, virtual meeting);

(d) Round table meeting with developing partners on WTO accession of Timor-Leste (26 November, Geneva, virtual meeting).

110. In support of WTO accession, UNCTAD launched in early 2021 a Development Account Project (13th Tranche) in post-conflict Arab countries (Iraq and State of Palestine).

111. In implementing work on the WTO accession process, UNCTAD collaborated and maintained close cooperation with the WTO secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank,

¹⁴ Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Ethiopia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Liberia, Samoa, Seychelles, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. An extensive network of cooperation had been established with national trade institutions and trade policymakers and regular contacts are maintained with donors.

Services, development and trade

112. The eighth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services, and Development (23–24 September) was focused on leveraging services, including infrastructure services, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It was highlighted that sound regulatory and institutional framework was necessary to ensure the supply of good quality infrastructure services. Smart regulations require a supportive institutional framework, with accountable regulators, including with regard to criteria related to the coherence, clarity and consistency of decisions. It is important to ensure regulatory transparency, particularly in the enforcement of laws to ensure stability, predictability, and confidence. The design of regulations should involve, as much as possible, the consideration of international standards and the establishment of bridges with other regulatory frameworks. Regulations are more effective if performance-based rather than prescriptive, to reduce rigidity, promote innovation and allow for lower compliance costs. It is necessary for regulatory impact assessments, implementation oversight and evaluation to be integral to regulatory design, to ensure that regulation is fit for purpose. Implementation and enforcement mechanisms should be transparent and equitable and envisage stability. Services, including infrastructure services, are increasingly covered in trade agreements, which impacts the national regulation of such services. A coherent and coordinated approach to domestic policymaking, regulation and trade liberalization is necessary to benefit from any agreement on trade in services.

113. UNCTAD carried out numerous activities aimed at enhancing national and regional capacities of developing countries on trade policy and trade negotiations as they relate to services. Technical assistance and customized support, including specialized training, was extended to policymakers and negotiators in developing countries and country groupings such as the LDCs, the African Group, small and vulnerable economies, in defining national and regional strategies and policies to build services supply capacities and in preparing themselves for General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and other trade negotiations and debates. Advisory services were provided to developing countries regarding debate on GATS and regional trade negotiations, defining strategies for services negotiations at the national, regional and multilateral levels, and at the interface between regional services negotiations and GATS negotiations and debates.

114. UNCTAD collaborated with the African Union in discussions on how to support the formulation and implementation of trade and services policies. The African Union Commission participated in the UNCTAD Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development (23–24 September), where discussions covered how the implementation of the services protocol of the AfCFTA could contribute to overcoming pandemic-related challenges and boosting trade in services. It also highlighted the relevance of services for modern industrialization and the need for aligned services negotiations and regulatory cooperation frameworks. UNCTAD participated in the African Union 9th Stakeholders Retreat (16–17 December, Geneva–Addis Ababa, virtual meeting), and discussed how its Services Policy Reviews, its Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development and its Global Services Forum can contribute to create capacity in policymaking on trade in services and provide an opportunity for further collaboration with the African Union.

115. UNCTAD implemented the Joint UNCTAD–UNECA Development Account Project on Services Trade in Africa and provided virtual technical assistance to the Governments of Ethiopia and Kenya on trade policy, including transport services development. Furthermore, stakeholders in the area of services trade negotiations under the European Union–UNCTAD joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, Services component were trained.

116. UNCTAD conducted and published country case studies for Cambodia, Nepal, Senegal and Zambia on the use of the WTO LDC waiver to promote their services exports through preferential treatment.¹⁵

117. In 2020 substantive contribution were made to national and regional technical and consultative meetings, such as:

(a) “What future for the global trading system?”, webinar organized by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE), 17 June.

(b) “Building back better in tourism: The roles of international organizations”, webinar organized by the World Trade Organization (WTO), 23 June.

(c) “Digital Credit Technologies and Financial Inclusion”, webinar organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 23 June.

(d) “Central Bank Digital Currency and Financial Inclusion”, webinar organized by the ITU, 26 June.

(e) “Digital currency applications and need for standards”, webinar organized by the ITU, 29 June.

(f) “What role for the United Kingdom in the global trading system?”, webinar organized by the PIIE, 8 July.

(g) “Global Services Forum 2021”, preparatory meeting with regional partners (ECLAC and Latin American Association of Services Exporters), 9 July.

(h) “Mobilizing and Retaining Resources to Build Back Better: Financial Integrity in Post COVID World”, High Level Political Forum virtual side event, 10 July.

(i) “Impact of COVID-19, reactivation measures and recommendations for tourism sector recovery”, webinar organized by the Central America Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA), 21 July.

(j) “Digital Currency Global Initiative”, intergovernmental and inter-agency initiative organized by the ITU, 23–24 July.

(k) “Interoperability and resilience requirements of Digital Payments System”, webinar organized by the ITU, 27 July.

(l) “Servicification and Manufacturing for Export”, webinar organized by the International Chamber of Commerce in Brazil, 28 July.

(m) Summit Forum, China International Fair for Trade in Services, 3 September 2020.

(n) “Digital Currency Global Initiative, Policy and Governance Working Group”, intergovernmental and interagency initiative organized by the ITU, 18 September.

(o) Trade and Development Board Briefing to UNCTAD delegates and Angola government officials in connection with the Multi-year Expert Meeting on trade, services, and development (9 and 21 September, virtual meeting).

(p) Keynote intervention on the Conference on “Trade in services, e-commerce and logistics in the pandemic economy” of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Researchers and Policymakers in the field of Services (REDLAS), 26 November 2020. This focused on the role of IT-enabled services before and during the pandemic, and on the

¹⁵ Effective Market Access for Least Developed Countries’ services exports: Case Study on Utilizing the World Trade Organization Services Waiver in Zambia, UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/MISC/2020/8; Effective Market Access for Least Developed Countries’ services exports: Case Study on Utilizing the World Trade Organization Services Waiver in Senegal, UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/MISC/2020/7; Effective Market Access for Least Developed Countries’ services exports: Case Study on Utilizing the World Trade Organization Services Waiver in Nepal, UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/MISC/2020/6; Effective Market Access for Least Developed Countries’ services exports: Case Study on Utilizing the World Trade Organization Services Waiver in Cambodia, UNCTAD/DITC/TNCD/MISC/2020/5.

policies required to harvest the development potential of services for post-pandemic economic recovery.

(q) Africa's services trade liberalization and integration under the AfCFTA: Assessing regional integration in Africa (ARIA X) (15 December, virtual meeting).

118. UNCTAD provided support to LDCs in negotiating their specific interests including the implementation of the Preferential Treatment in Favour of Services and Service Suppliers of LDCs and their participation in services trade.

119. UNCTAD has emphasized the importance of potential benefits and opportunities of trade, investment and developmental links between countries of origin of migrants and their communities abroad as well as the issue of maximizing the development impact of remittances. UNCTAD continues to participate in the United Nations Network on Migration and in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) to highlight the linkages between trade, services, migration and development. In this context, UNCTAD collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other agencies in providing to the countries in the GFMD a background paper on "The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development - Skilling Migrants for Employment". With the Trade Negotiations and Commercial Diplomacy Branch (TNCDB) of the Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC) as the focal point in UNCTAD, this work includes the participation in the process of setting up the United Nations Network on Migration as the successor of the Global Migration Group (GMG). In 2020, UNCTAD contributed to the following meetings on migration trade and development:

(a) "COVID-19 and People on the Move", webinar organized by the United Nations Network on Migration, 17 June.

(b) "The many faces of women and men migrant workers", webinar organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 26 June.

(c) "Migrant workers and COVID-19", webinar organized by the ILO, 26 June.

(d) Second annual meeting of the United Nations Network on Migration, 15–16 December 2020 (virtual conference).

Market access and trade preferences

120. With regard to GSP and other trade preferences, UNCTAD has continued to promote enhanced awareness among developing countries on ways to better utilize the preferences available under GSP and other preferential schemes through the periodic provision of information on a dedicated website, administrative support on certificates of origin, collection of data, publication of handbooks on GSP schemes and technical cooperation and capacity-building services. UNCTAD ensured the dissemination of relevant information by updating and revising GSP handbooks of individual GSPs and related schemes and preparing related studies. In 2020, the following publications were prepared: GSP Handbook of Canada and GSP Handbook of Japan. UNCTAD also continued to compile and update the GSP database based on data submitted by GSP donor countries, which provide useful information on trade conducted under each preferential scheme. Going forward, the Trade Negotiations and Commercial Diplomacy Branch, in cooperation with Trade Analysis Branch and Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, will intensify its efforts to disseminate GSP preferential trade data.

121. With regard to GSTP, UNCTAD continued to act as the secretariat of the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP) providing support to the participants in the operation of GSTP Agreement and their efforts to revitalize the GSTP as a unique platform of South–South trade cooperation. Outreach efforts were conducted to raise awareness on the necessity of revitalizing GSTP. For instance, the Group of 77 and China was briefed on its stakes and issues under GSTP (17 December). A special event is being proposed on GSTP at the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

122. **Results and impacts.** Through its integrated analytical and capacity-building activities UNCTAD has strengthened capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in participating in the multilateral and regional trade negotiations to integrate beneficially into the global economy and the international trading system. UNCTAD assistance enhanced ability of policymakers and trade negotiators of developing countries and countries in transition to under the emerging issues arising in the international trading system, such as the WTO reform, especially the WTO debate on categorization of developing countries in the use of special and differential treatment in future trade agreements, and the importance of aligning the multilateral and regional or bilateral trade agreements with the national goals of inclusive and sustained development. UNCTAD intervention has had sustained positive strong impact in strengthening human, institutional, and regulatory capacities in trade negotiations in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

123. UNCTAD successfully supported the accession negotiations of a number of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The following beneficiaries under the General Trust Fund for WTO Accession recently became WTO members: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Liberia and Seychelles. These countries expressed appreciation for UNCTAD assistance. UNCTAD continued to receive an increasing number of requests for support on WTO accession from a variety of countries, including LDCs (Comoros, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). To meet the needs of acceding countries, it is necessary to secure adequate funding for technical assistance on WTO accession.

124. UNCTAD work on services, trade and development has helped developing countries better understand this area, and the potential opportunities this field can provide. Greater synergy was created between the three pillars of UNCTAD work on services. UNCTAD support to trade policymakers and trade negotiators in continuing to articulate their interests in the multilateral, regional and bilateral services negotiations helped them to maintain the development focus in the negotiations. The developmental benefits of international migration and related remittances have received added emphasis from UNCTAD in the light of its growing impact on development prospects. UNCTAD support helped countries and regional integration groupings to ensure greater coherence in priorities pursued multilaterally, regionally, and bilaterally. UNCTAD assistance was important in facilitating enhanced extensive multi-stakeholder consultations on services development. Sharing of experiences and lessons learnt had been a special feature of UNCTAD support, which was repeatedly appreciated by member States.

125. UNCTAD support in the area of market access and trade preferences has contributed to building the knowledge base and to wider dissemination of GSP-related information, including through the preparation of GSP handbooks, and collection and analysis of GSP trade data, as well as improved understanding and awareness of GSP among exporters and government officials in some individual beneficiary countries. UNCTAD contributed to making LDC preferences more effective, so that they better contribute to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and further, towards achieving the Goals. UNCTAD support provided to GSTP participants has ensured the operation of the Agreement and effective follow-up of the Sao Paulo Round results towards its effective implementation by the signatories. Further efforts are needed towards effective implementation of the Sao Paulo Round results, which could provide an important impetus for robust expansion of South–South trade and deepening South–South cooperation.

A10 Sustainable trade and the environment

Table A10
Sustainable trade and the environment

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
INT/0T/7BS	Climate change programme	2007–	Norway
INT/0T/EBF	BioTrade facilitation programme, phase III	2015–	Switzerland
INT/0T/HAI	BioTrade Facilitation Programme: Linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development	2019–	Switzerland
INT/0T/HBD	Sustainable manufacturing and environmental pollution programme	2018–	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
ROA-1819 (K11)	Evidence-based and policy coherent oceans economy and trade strategies	2018–	Development Account

126. **Development context.** The Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development recognized that countries' transition to a green economy can make increasing contributions to sustainable development and poverty eradication through economic diversification, employment creation, export earnings, environmental protection and social equity. Sustainable products, defined as internationally traded goods and services that are sustainably produced and promote sustainable consumption, offer considerable export opportunities for developing countries. Many sustainable products are produced in rural areas by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), by lower- and medium-skill workers including women and youth, and their production can contribute significantly to environmental protection, efficient and sustainable use of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity, economic diversification, job creation and poverty reduction in economically marginalized rural areas of developing countries. To seize these new inclusive and sustainable growth opportunities, developing countries need strengthened capacity to identify their production and export strengths for sustainable products, sustainable use and trade of biodiversity-derived products and services, and put into place national policies, regulations and institutions needed to create an enabling environment for their production and export.

127. **Objectives/features.** Programmes and initiatives on sustainable trade and the environment aim to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in designing and implementing mutually supportive trade, environment, climate change and sustainable development strategies while integrating sustainable development objectives at all levels. UNCTAD explores the trade opportunities arising from multilateral environmental agreements, as well as trade and environment-related negotiations. It promotes sustainable trade in sectors that contribute to further economic growth, job creation and opportunities for social inclusion, and biodiversity conservation. UNCTAD work is based on requests from developing countries to examine the development impact and economic repercussions of existing and potential multilateral environmental agreements, as well as trade and environment negotiations and how best to address the challenges and seize the opportunities related to trade. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals and the principles under the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNCTAD facilitates multilateral and expert processes in areas in which the environmental aspect is central to trade. Making economic growth compatible with

sustainable development requires adequate policies and mechanisms, and UNCTAD programmes and initiatives on sustainable trade and the environment work towards stimulating economic diversification, creating jobs, raising income levels, fostering environmental protection and conserving biodiversity resources, thereby improving living standards.

128. **Outputs.** In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCTAD was able to implement technical cooperation activities by using advanced communication technology in organizing meetings and seminars as well as in undertaking advisory services and consultations through virtual platforms. Efforts were undertaken to adjust its work programme and included COVID-19 in its research and analysis, consensus-building and technical cooperation activities.

129. Under the climate change programme, UNCTAD published the *Trade and Environment Review 2021* on trade-climate readiness for developing countries, and a research paper on climate change, sustainability transitions and trade.

130. UNCTAD, as requested by China and Fiji, prepared and submitted an analysis on trade in plastics sustainability and development to the World Trade Organization's Committee on Trade and Environment (WTO CTE). The analysis aimed at assisting WTO Members in their discussions of "trade, plastic pollution and a sustainable plastics economy" and transitions to a more circular economy. It considers the developing countries' shift from plastic production to the development of sunrise industries of plastic substitutes with low environmental footprint, recyclable, biodegradable or subject to erosion, such as natural fibres and agricultural wastes. The UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative and its partners contributed to the United Nations Environmental Management Group (EMG) report entitled A United Nations System Commitment for Action to stop the Loss of Biodiversity and a background concept of the United Nations Biodiversity Summit.

131. UNCTAD continued to coordinate the Global BioTrade Programme: Linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development and provided technical assistance in implementing BioTrade in Africa, Asia and Latin America. BioTrade experiences, lessons learned and methodologies were disseminated in different events organized by partners and other organizations in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Mekong regions. UNCTAD also held dialogues with BioTrade stakeholders and partners in disseminating best practices of how BioTrade is enhancing companies' resilience to COVID-19. The Third Stakeholders' Steering Committee (SSC) meeting was held on 5 May 2020 via Webex. The meeting provided a platform for international coordination in promoting sector collaboration, coordinating joint initiatives in more than 60 countries, identifying and addressing emerging issues and sharing knowledge, lessons learned and best practices. The 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria and a biotrade self-assessment tool were launched on 16 November 2020. The updated BioTrade Principles and Criteria strengthens UNCTAD work in mainstreaming biotrade in relevant multilateral, regional and national processes, and in building the case of the positive role that trade can play when conducted under environmental, social and economic sustainability criteria. In collaboration with the Development Statistics and Information Branch (DSIB) of UNCTAD, a trade and biodiversity mechanism was developed to assist BioTrade partners, actors and key stakeholders in developing their activities. It could also provide them with data on trade flows of biodiversity-based products from 2007, which could be useful in their reporting in other national and international processes, including the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. A pilot exercise with 14 countries and over 140 HS codes was completed in early 2020. This served as the basis in upscaling the mechanism to cover all countries and biodiversity-based products.

132. UNCTAD launched the project "Seizing the trade and business potential of blue biotrade products for promoting sustainable livelihoods and conservation of marine biodiversity in selected Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries" on 7 October 2020. The project aims at promoting trade and investment in marine biological resources using the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria. It is jointly implemented by UNCTAD and OECS in cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

133. UNCTAD continued to implement the Development Account project on Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies – OETS (1819K) aimed at building capacity in identifying oceans-based products and services with potential in Barbados, Belize and Costa Rica. Online consultations with the focal points in the beneficiary countries were held on the impacts of COVID-19 on the value chains being analysed. UNCTAD also conducted policy-oriented research on Sustainable Development Goal 14 and sustainable fisheries value chains, blue biotrade, fish subsidies negotiations, blue economy and COVID-19 and a 2020 oceans economy classification. In Barbados, the Second National Stakeholder Workshop to discuss and validate the Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy was held from 3 to 4 March 2020 in Bridgetown. The OETS strategy and the derived plan of action will work towards increasing the value and sustainability of tuna exports. The Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy of Belize was published in November 2020. The report assesses the economic potential and regulatory needs for the marine fisheries (finfish) and seafood processing sectors (queen conch and spiny lobster). It also presents an action plan that enables sustainable trade in these sectors. In Costa Rica, a training webinar on the experiences in the use of distinctive signs and traceability systems in the country's fisheries sector was held on 24 November 2020. The webinar provided a platform to share experiences in using various forms of distinctive signs as a marketing tool in promoting the origin, quality and sustainability of fish and seafood products in Costa Rica.

134. Under the work on Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution (SMEP) Programme, UNCTAD published the report entitled "Manufacturing Pollution in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia: Implications for the environment, health and future work". It examines impacts on human health and ecosystems arising from manufacturing pollution in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The results from this scoping study will be used to inform and further define the scope of research calls to be commissioned under the SMEP programme.

135. Under the European Union-UNCTAD joint Programme of support for Angola to strengthen and diversify its economy towards more sustainable products, UNCTAD organized a webinar on cooperation for apiculture development in Angola on 29 July 2020. Fifty representatives from the country's private sector, Government of Angola and academia participated in the webinar, where national experts provided a diagnostic of the Angolan honey sector and four Brazilian experts shared their experiences in upgrading production for certification and exports. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the capacity-building seminar reached eight remote provinces. Producers, university professors and government representatives from eight provinces actively engaged in the training. Bridging of the digital gap will continue through delivery of the training to additional provinces and beneficiaries, as well as follow-up mentoring.

136. In increasing the awareness and understanding of issues related to sustainable trade and the environment by public and private stakeholders, UNCTAD organized and/or participated in various seminars, workshops, conferences as well as relevant discussions of international development processes. A complete list of events is below:

- (a) Second National Stakeholder Workshop: Discussion and validation of an Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy for Barbados toward a sustainable tuna value chain, 3 to 4 March 2020, Bridgetown, Barbados;
- (b) Circular Economy Symposium at Harvard, 6 March 2020;
- (c) Webinar on the Blue Economy and the COVID-19 Pandemic: new challenges, recovery measures and resilience, 4 June 2020;
- (d) Webinars on the Trade and Biodiversity mechanism for Latin America, 10 June 2020 and for the Mekong region, India and Europe on 12 June 2020;
- (e) Participation in the panel 2020 GlobalChem Webinar Series: Part 9 – Sustainability: A New Benchmark for Chemicals and Chemical Regulation?, 1 July 2020;
- (f) UNCTAD presentation of an analysis of trade in plastics, sustainability and development to the World Trade Organization's trade and environment committee, 3 July 2020;

- (g) Participation in the panel Nexus Dialogue on COVID-19 and the Environment: Pollution and Waste, 14 July 2020;
- (h) Webinar on Cooperation for Apiculture Development in Angola, 29 July 2020;
- (i) Informal e-session between the Commission for the Promotion of BioTrade (Peru) and UNCTAD on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, 15 September 2020;
- (j) Biodiversity and Trade Webinar I – Sustainable guidelines for biodiversity, 23 September 2020;
- (k) Trade, biodiversity and natural resources: What role for trade policy in a new deal for nature?, 29 September 2020;
- (l) Trade and trade policy in the fight against plastic pollution: What are the challenges and opportunities?, 30 September 2020;
- (m) Launch of the project “Seizing the trade and business potential of Blue BioTrade in selected Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries”, 7 October 2020;
- (n) 15th Global Forum on Human Settlements, 15–16 October 2020;
- (o) Trade and Biodiversity Webinar II: Sustainable guidelines for biodiversity-based value chains in Latin America and the Caribbean (via Zoom), 28 October 2020;
- (p) Towards model provisions for trade in times of crisis and pandemic in regional and other trade agreements, 29 October 2020;
- (q) Webinar Launch of the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria: Making sustainable trade part of the solution, 16 November 2020;
- (r) Think2030 conference: Circular economy in aid of global recovery panel, 17 November 2020; and
- (s) Webinar on the Experiences in the use of distinctive signs and traceability systems in the fisheries sector of Costa Rica, 24 November 2020.

137. The following reports, publications and opinion pieces were prepared:

- (a) Economic and trade aspects of fisheries and coastal and marine environmental services sectors in Barbados – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/INF/2020/1;
- (b) The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Blue Economy: New challenges and prospects for recovery and resilience – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/INF/2020/2;
- (c) Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy – Costa Rica: Tuna, Seabream, Swordfish and Coastal Fish Sectors – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/INF/2020/3;¹⁶
- (d) Towards an Effective and Practical Verification and Transparency Mechanism on the Utilization of Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge in Intellectual Property System of Viet Nam – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/INF/2020/4;
- (e) Oceans Economy and Trade Strategy: Belize marine fisheries and seafood processing sectors – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/INF/2020/5;
- (f) Guidelines and Model Clauses on Access and Benefit-Sharing and BioTrade in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2020/1;
- (g) BioTrade Principles and Criteria – for Terrestrial, Marine and Other Aquatic Biodiversity-based Products and Services – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2020/2;
- (h) Trade and Environment Review 2021: Trade-Climate Readiness for Developing Countries – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2020/3;
- (i) Climate change, sustainability transitions and trade – UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2020/4;
- (j) Op-ed on the environmental impacts of coronavirus crisis, challenges ahead;

¹⁶ Unofficial translation of original Spanish.

(k) Op-ed on the opportunities of COVID-19 in making fishing industries more sustainable;

(l) How to craft a strong WTO deal on fishing subsidies – commentary on the WTO fish subsidies text for a potential agreement on tackling harmful fish subsidies.

138. **Results.** UNCTAD submission of the analysis on trade in plastics sustainability and development to the WTO opened an opportunity for UNCTAD to be a major player on the topic of trade in plastics at the WTO CTE, the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention and other international forums. Research on the potential and trade trends of plastic substitutes could be carried out in this regard.

139. In the wake of the pandemic, the BioTrade Stakeholders Steering Committee members have issued a call to action urging countries to use BioTrade as a lever for recovery and resilience. One small company in Myanmar has acknowledged that adopting the BioTrade Principles and Criteria earlier on in their operations made them resilient to the business challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

140. Biotrade's importance was recognized by the biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), particularly in the decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to CITES and the draft long-term strategic framework for capacity development to support implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

141. The implementation of UNCTAD programmes on sustainable trade and the environment is anchored on partnerships with like-minded organizations and institutions in delivering results. In implementing the work on oceans economy and fisheries, partnerships proved crucial in developing a coherent strategy, coordinating actions, and implementing activities in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14. Partnerships with BioTrade practitioners and stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and trade of its derived products and services played an important role in further strengthening governance frameworks, mechanisms, and networks in scaling up the BioTrade agenda.

A11 Investment promotion and facilitation

Table A11

Investment promotion and facilitation

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/1BN	Capacity-building in investment promotion	2001–	Multi-donors
INT/OT/BAQ	Capacity-Building in Investment for Development	2011–	Multi-donors
ROA-1819 (M11)	Facilitating investment into Sustainable Development Goals sectors in developing countries	2018–	Development Account

142. **Development context.** Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a critical source of finance for developing countries, but the competition for FDI is fierce. This has resulted in proactive policies to attract and retain foreign investment, including investment in Sustainable Development Goal sectors, in order to generate inclusive and sustainable economic growth and build resilient infrastructure while safeguarding the environment.

143. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD work on investment promotion aims to assist developing countries in strengthening their capacity to create and manage the policy and institutional framework for attracting and retaining foreign investment and in developing an operating climate in which international business can thrive and contribute to sustainable development. The investment promotion programme provides tailor-made training, advisory and networking services, and prepares publications related to investment policies,

investment promotion strategies and practices, investment facilitation, aftercare services, and institutional arrangements and good governance in attracting and retaining sustainable FDI. Special attention is being paid to strengthening investment promotion programmes in least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing States (SIDS).

144. **Outputs:** In 2020, the main outputs of the programme were as detailed below.

Publications and training material

145. *Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of Diplomats.* This publication in the Investment Advisory Series is a handbook for diplomats and commercial attachés on the role that the diplomatic service can play in promoting and facilitating Sustainable Development Goal-related projects. It includes examples of best international practices, listings of potential stakeholders, diplomat’s checklists and practical tools.

146. *Investment Promotion Agencies: Striving to Overcome the COVID-19 Challenge.* This advisory report for investment promotion agencies (IPAs) on COVID-19 related challenges and remedies includes results from an UNCTAD survey on the online response of IPAs to the pandemic and a selection of innovative and proactive measures that IPAs had taken in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

147. *Special Economic Zones and Urbanization* is an UNCTAD–UN-Habitat discussion paper on the links between special economic zones (SEZs) and sustainable urbanization. The paper includes examples from different countries and continents, and recommendations on how to maximize mutual benefits between zones and sustainable urban development.

148. *Post-COVID-19: Investment Promotion Agencies and the “New Normal”.* This issue in the IPA Observer series looks at emerging IPA trends in the “new normal”, including changes in strategies with new target sectors, adjustments in the use of investment promotion and facilitation practices, the servicing of new client groups and more attention for strategic partnerships.

149. *Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Investment Promotion.* Based on an UNCTAD IPA survey on gender, this issue in the IPA Observer series looks at the way that IPAs integrate women’s empowerment in the investment promotion workflow and how they support gender equality in-house. The publication includes case studies and practices from around the globe that could inform IPAs on how to advance gender equality and Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Workshops, seminars and conferences

150. On 11 February 2020, as a side event at the World Urban Forum 10 in Abi Dhabi, UNCTAD held a session on Urbanization and the Role of SEZs that included panel discussions with experts from UNCTAD, UN-Habitat, Masdar City and the private sector.

151. On 7 April 2020, a brainstorm session of heads of IPAs was held to discuss and advise IPAs on the immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis. Over 20 agencies from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas participated. This webinar was the first brainstorming meeting of IPA Executives from across the globe on challenges and actions that IPAs could take as a response to the health crisis, national lockdowns and travel bans.

152. On 27 May 2020, a regional webinar was held for the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) IPAs entitled “Towards Post COVID-19: IPAs Adapting to the New Normal”. The webinar brought together over 80 participants from 15 African countries. Panellists represented UNCTAD, the secretariats of the EAC and SADC as well as business councils and 9 IPAs from both regions. On 30 June 2020, a similar regional webinar was held in collaboration with Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA) and the Caribbean Export Development Agency for over 90 officials from IPAs of 19 Caribbean countries and territories. The panel included high-level officials from IPAs from the Caribbean and Mauritius as well as from CAIPA and private sector entities.

153. On 18 September 2020, the P166 short course Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of Diplomats was held at the Palais des Nations for delegates of permanent mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva and the World Trade Organization. The interactive course provided diplomats with a general background on FDI trends worldwide, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on FDI prospects and investment promotion, and the promotion of investment in Goal-related projects with best practices and tools for diplomats. The course had over 20 participants from 16 countries.

154. On 7 and 8 December 2020, over 800 officials from IPAs and SEZs, policy makers, private sector executives and other investment stakeholders from across the world participated in the Global Investment Promotion Conference, an UNCTAD World Investment Forum satellite event that was organized in partnership with the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). The virtual conference brought together state leaders, ministers, and high-level executives from leading global companies, international finance institutions and private sector groups, as well as Chief Executive Officers from IPAs and SEZs. Discussions focussed on the shape of the investment promotion and facilitation landscape beyond the pandemic.

155. In 2020, a large number of online substantive interventions on investment promotion and facilitation were organized by or with partner organizations, including the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM), the ANIMA Network of Mediterranean IPAs, Belarus National Agency for Investment and Privatization, CARICOM, CAIPA, ECLAC, ILO, the Jamaica Promotions Cooperation (JAMPRO), the Government of Curaçao, the Ibero-American Network of Export Promotion and Investment Attraction Entities (REDIBERO), UN-Habitat and WAIPA.

Advisory services and best practice exchanges

156. The UNCTAD investment promotion programme created and monitored a database on the online response of 180 IPAs to the COVID-19 crisis. Based on this data, an international panel of judges selected three winners of the United Nations Investment Promotion Awards 2020 for Excellence in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis. On 7 December 2020, the winning agencies received the awards during an UNCTAD global investment promotion conference. The winners were the Estonian Investment Agency, Invest India and the Rwanda Development Board.

157. UNCTAD conducted a survey on Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Investment Promotion. Fifty-two IPAs participated in the survey, and several were interviewed on whether and how IPAs are introducing gender issues in their day-to-day work. From all the information collected, a publication was prepared in the IPA Observer series. In addition, the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE) was identified as a best practice agency and received a Special Recognition for Mainstreaming Gender in Investment Promotion, from UNCTAD on 7 December 2020.

158. In May 2020, advisory services were provided to PRONACOM, the IPA of Guatemala, on the strengthening of investor aftercare services through online consultations. In August 2020, UNCTAD participated in an online discussion with senior management of the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) and other investment stakeholders in Jamaica on adapting and transforming investment promotion beyond the COVID-19 crisis. UNCTAD also provided comments to the green paper of the Government of Jamaica, on national investment policy.

159. The UNCTAD sustainablefdi.org website is specifically designed for IPA professionals, policymakers and other investment stakeholders. It features a resource centre, UNCTAD activities on sustainable FDI, a network of IPA contacts, training material, and a new window on the United Nations Investment Promotion Awards, showcasing best practices. Over the year 2020, the sustainablefdi.org platform had 3,318 visitors with a total of 14,544 page views. The visitors were from 167 countries, including 152 developing countries.

160. **Results and impact.** In 2020, over 1,200 IPA officials, SEZ representatives, diplomats and other investment stakeholders participated in UNCTAD investment promotion training sessions and global meetings. Other online events by partner

organization in which UNCTAD made substantive interventions on investment promotion and facilitation had another 1,000 participants. Comments from IPAs and IPA associations received included:

(a) “Thank you for the wonderful presentation These sessions provide our Investment Promotion Agency with valuable information and further reference we can use to realize the Agency’s mandate in the most productive way in order to attract foreign investment and promote exports.” Moldovan Investment and Export Promotion Organization.

(b) “This was very useful, especially for Zimbabwe as we have just established a new IPA. The presentations will assist us as we strategize for the new organization. The IPAs presented varied practical solutions to COVID-19 that are easy to replicate and implement.” Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency.

(c) “It [UNCTAD’s Global Investment Promotion Conference] is an excellent opportunity to showcase the work of the IPAs as well as to share best practices and lessons learned.” PROPANAMA, Panama.

(d) “The webinar was excellent. It gave us a good perspective on the post-COVID-19 environment and the possible options the Caribbean can consider in moving forward.” CAIPA secretariat.

161. Selection of other reactions to UNCTAD’s investment promotion programme activities in 2020:

(a) “Congratulations to Invest India for winning the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award given by UNCTAD. This is a testimony to our Government’s focus on making India the world’s preferred investment destination and improving ease of doing business.” Prime Minister of India.

(b) “I would like to acknowledge UNCTAD for their continued efforts in facilitating these exchanges and fostering greater cooperation and dialogue amongst countries on investment promotion. They do a tremendous job.” Minister of Investment of the United Kingdom.

(c) “Thank you so much for sending me that excellent publication on investment promotion during COVID-19. I have shared it with my colleagues back home, and we are finding it very useful indeed.” Ambassador of Namibia to Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

(d) “Creating markets and creating bankable projects will be key for a resilient recovery. Thanks @UNCTAD for hosting such a positive, solution-focused Global Investment Promotion Conference + awards!” Vice-President of the International Finance Corporation.

162. Cooperation with partner organizations was strengthened during the COVID-19 crisis, particularly with investment promotion associations. A series of joint events were organized with the ANIMA network of Mediterranean IPAs, CAIPA and WAIPA. Cooperation with United Nations entities was also strengthened, including with the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF/WTO), ILO, UN-DESA, UNOHRLLS and UNIDO.

A99 Other

Table A99

Other

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
<i>Division on Investment and Enterprise</i>			
INT/0T/3AO	Support to the UNCTAD–International Chamber of Commerce Investment Advisory Council	2003–	Multi-donors

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/0T/BAQ	Capacity-building in investment for development	2011–	Multi-donors
RAS/0T/EAY	ASEAN Investment Report 2015–2017	2015–	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
INT/0T/HCJ	Strategic Partnership the Netherlands	2018–	Netherlands
INT/0H/WIF	WIF Abu Dhabi 2020	2020–	United Arab Emirates
<i>Division on International Trade and Commodities</i>			
INT/0T/IBM	4th UNFSS Flagship Report on Voluntary Sustainable	2020–	United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards
ROA-1617 (AI10)	Fostering the development of green exports through voluntary sustainability standards in Asia and the Pacific	2016–	Development Account
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
<i>Division on Globalization and Development Strategies</i>			
INT/0T/HBY	South–South Integration and the [Sustainable Development Goals] SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in key partner countries of the Belt and Road Initiative	2019–	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
INT/0T/HCD	Reclaiming multilateralism for global development	2018–	Public donation
ROA-1617 (L10)	Development policies for sustainable economic growth in Southern Africa	2017–	Development Account

1. Trade and creative economy

163. **Development context.** Over the last fifteen years, the topic of creative economy has become well-inserted into the international economic and development agenda. Today, creative industries are among the most dynamic sectors in world trade. UNCTAD research shows that between 2010 and 2015, creative goods exports outpaced global merchandise exports. In terms of creative services, exports had an annual growth rate of 4 per cent between 2011 and 2015.¹⁷ The creative economy generates jobs, innovation and trade, while contributing to social inclusion and cultural diversity.

164. Recognition of the scope, role, and impact of the creative economy on countries' socio-economic development has only accelerated, alongside increased demand for insight into the creative economy. The creative economy is thus increasingly high on both the global agenda and that of emerging and developing economies seeking to diversify their economies.

¹⁷ https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted2018d3_en.pdf

165. In December 2019, the United Nations General Assembly adopted for the first time a resolution on the creative economy (A/RES/74/198). This resolution, which was co-sponsored by 81 countries and agreed by consensus, highlights the creative economy as an important tool for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and declares 2021 the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. This resolution gives UNCTAD the mandate to inform the General Assembly in a dedicated section of the Creative Economy Outlook of UNCTAD on how the implementation of General Assembly resolution 74/198 “is aligned with and advances the 2030 Agenda, including recommendations on concrete actions that would help Member States and the United Nations system to accelerate their efforts in the implementation of the Agenda”.¹⁸

166. **Objectives and features.** Since the creation of the Creative Economy Programme in 2004, UNCTAD has played a leading role in supporting developing countries to enhance understanding of the economic contribution of the creative industries from a trade and development perspective through capacity-building, analysis and consensus-building.

167. The programme’s core focus is on trade in the creative industries and the role of the creative economy in the growth of developing economies. UNCTAD data-driven insights on trade in creative goods and services make a unique contribution to understanding the creative economy.

168. Reliable and consistent data on the trade in creative goods and services remain the key drivers of the UNCTAD creative economy programme. A key component of the UNCTAD Creative Economy Programme is its proprietary statistical database on trade in creative goods and services. The data offering is one of our key unique selling points. However, data need to be interpreted, analysed and used to inform decision-making at both a policy and practical level. Flowing from UNCTAD data offering on the creative economy are a range of services that make use of this data to provide effective support for member States that is aligned with the three pillars of UNCTAD, including (a) advisory services; (b) policy-orientated research; (c) improving market access; (d) building synergies; (e) intergovernmental debates; (f) promoting entrepreneurship; (g) capacity-building; and (h) sharing knowledge.

169. The UNCTAD creative economy programme generates economic information through a trade lens, to understand past trends and project into the future and to promote data-led understanding of trade in creative goods and services, intellectual property, ideas and imagination. This information is translated into insight for countries wanting to expand and support their creative economies. It also:

- (a) Promotes the creative economy as a new source of growth;
- (b) Supports government initiatives for the development of integrated creative economy public policies and institution-building;
- (c) Liaises with Governments, artists, creators, academia and civil society to strengthen the creative economy in developing countries;
- (d) Provides demand-driven policy advice and technical assistance to Governments;
- (e) Builds synergies within the United Nations system through the United Nations Multi-Agency Informal Group on Creative Industries;
- (f) Organizes and/or participates in international conferences, national seminars or sectoral workshops;
- (g) Promotes networking through the UNCTAD creative economy network;
- (h) Contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 16.¹⁹

¹⁸ A/RES/74/198, paragraph 6, 19 December 2019.

¹⁹ Goal 3 “Good Health and Well-Being for People”, Goal, 8 “Decent work and economic growth”, Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation», Goal 11: “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”,

170. **Outputs and results.** In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, UNCTAD (a) contributed to the research on the current opportunities and challenges of “*Finance for cultural and creative industries in Africa*” in cooperation with Hatch Africa and conducted peer review of research findings; (b) engaged virtually with counterparts of the U20 Taskforce 2 (i.e. Inclusive Prosperous Communities) to provide feedback in the peer view of the White Paper and Policy Recommendations entitled “*Inclusive Creative Economy and the Future of Work*”; (c) contributed to the *Creativity, Culture & Capital* platform and publication to showcase the potential of impact investment in the creative economy to drive social and environmental change in collaboration with *Nesta*, *Compromise Foundation* and *Upstart Co-Lab*; and (d) continued on-going research on methodologies to measure creative industries in developing countries.

171. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the creative economy (A/RES/74/198) requests the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and relevant entities of the United Nations system, to inform the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session of the implementation of the present resolution, through a dedicated section of the Creative Economy Outlook (UNCTAD), elaborating in particular on how the resolution is aligned with and advances the 2030 Agenda. UNCTAD established an informal group of United Nations agencies with proposed issues for contribution to the Creative Economy Outlook which will report back to the General Assembly in 2022.

172. In 2020, UNCTAD contributed to following webinars:

(a) Panel “Alone Together: Culture and Resilience”, Abu Dhabi, 9 April 2020. The event was organized by the Department of Culture and Tourism. The discussions addressed how cultural organisations can endure this period of shutdown and what needs to be done to support institutions and artists. UNCTAD is part of the Culture Summit partners which include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Museum, the Royal Academy of Arts, The Economist Events, Google, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Emirates Diplomatic Academy and Berklee Abu Dhabi²⁰.

(b) Webinar “COVID-19 and the creative economy: challenges and opportunities”, Indonesia, 26 August 2020. The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic affected all sectors of life as it poses challenges to most countries in the world. Faced with this unprecedented situation, the meeting served as a platform to exchange views and share best practices on how to deal with this pandemic while improving the economy.

(c) Webinars “The 14th International Fair for Trade in Services and Fifth edition of the Beijing Forum on Creative Economy: Scientific and technological innovation promoting a sustainable future”, Beijing, 7 September 2020. The events were organized jointly with Beijing Municipal Government and the World Trade Point Federation in the framework of the 2020 China Trade in Services Fair (CIFTIS).

(d) Webinar “The Festival Academy: Sustainability and the arts sector in a time of COVID-19”, Belgium, 24 September 2020. The event had 45 participants from 36 countries and 5 continents.

(e) UNCTAD Trade Policy Dialogue (online): “Elements of a policy mix for trade-led recovery: Services, creative economy, and making the best of trade agreements”, organized by the Division on International Trade and Commodities (DITC) for the Group of 77 and China, 16 November 2020.

Interagency collaboration events

173. In collaboration with UNDP Malaysia, UNCTAD contributed to the webinar “Malaysia’s adoption of the United Nations International Year on Creative Economy for Sustainable Development 2021”, which was held in Malaysia on 26 October 2020. The

Goal 17: “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”.

²⁰ See <https://www.culturesummitabudhabi.com/en/about-us.aspx>.

objective of the live forum was to celebrate the United Nations resolution on creative economy, raise awareness of its importance, promote cooperation and networking, encourage the sharing of best practices and experiences and promote an enabling environment at all levels and address the challenges faced by the COVID-19.

174. In collaboration with ITU and the Wallonia-Brussels General Delegation, and in the framework of the ITU Forum AI For Good, UNCTAD contributed to the workshop “Future Challenges for AI and the Creative Economy: Societal Impacts of Machines, Intellectual Property, and Development towards 2030”, held on 16 December 2020.

Sustainable development

175. UNCTAD participated in the Steering Committee meeting of the United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion on 28 October 2020. The United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion is an initiative of United Nations agencies and allied organizations designed to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals through coordinated action in the fashion sector. Specifically, the Alliance works to support coordination between United Nations bodies working in fashion and promotes projects and policies that ensure that the fashion value chain contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets.

Expert meetings and forums

176. Senior Official Meeting of the Friends of Creative Economy on 11 and 12 November 2020. The meeting, which was held to prepare for the implementation of the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development 2021, was attended by 112 delegates from 55 countries and 8 international organizations, including UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNDP and ASEAN. The meeting also discussed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative economy, and how efforts to strengthen the revival and resilience of the creative economy sector might contribute to global economic recovery. The meeting requested UNCTAD to set up an online form where various stakeholders can upload details of their events and to share this information with United Nations agencies, member States and other stakeholders.

European Union-UNCTAD joint Programme for Angola: Creative economy component

177. The UNCTAD creative economy component under the European Union–UNCTAD joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II is intended to support the Government’s objectives to promote the cultural and creative industries of Angola and encourage economic diversification. It will directly contribute to the implementation of Programme 1.7.2: “Promotion of Cultural and Creative Arts and Industries” under the National Development Plan 2018–2022 of Angola.²¹ The objectives of the Angola creative economy component, which are in line with the objectives of the overall Train for Trade II Programme, are: (a) to assess the trade (export) potential of the creative economy of Angola; (b) to identify key bottlenecks that undermine efforts to harness the socioeconomic potential of the creative economy of Angola; and (c) to build the institutional and human capacities of Angola to formulate and implement policies and strategies to unlock binding constraints.

178. In 2020, under creative economy component UNCTAD carried out following activities:

179. *High-Level Virtual Meeting: Creative Economy Component: Cultural and creative industries, 18 May 2020.* The first working meeting of this project took place remotely on 18 May bringing together representatives of the Government of Angola, the European Union and UNCTAD. The aim of the meeting was to present the creative economy component of the Train for Trade II programme, its structure, workplan and technical team, as well as to collect contributions from different government officials and define the next stages of work.

²¹ Angola, National Development Plan 2018–2022, Programa 1.7.2: Fomento da Arte e das Indústrias Culturais e Criativas, April 2018, p. 117.

180. *First National Conversation on Creative Economy for Government representatives in Angola, 6 October 2020.* The First National Conversation was held to enable Government stakeholders to express their views over the first phase of the project lifecycle and to present for discussion and feedback the following documents:

- (a) A draft report showing the importance of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) for Angolan economic diversification; a suggestion of sectors and subsectors of CCIs to be discussed and adopted in Angola; a diagnosis of the support infrastructures and policies most relevant to the sector in Angola; a systematic analysis of the value chain of the main CCIs sectors in the country, as well as a SWOT analysis of Angolan CCIs;
- (b) Two draft technical notes: (I) The international dimension of the cultural and creative industries: Image, export and investment; and (II) Cultural and creative tourism;
- (c) An action plan including measures to be adopted jointly by the Government of Angola, cultural and creative entrepreneurs, associations, foundations and private enterprises from other areas that can support the cultural and creative industries;
- (d) Suggestion on content materials and desired outcomes for training modules.

181. Valuable comments and feedback were provided by the stakeholders directed to improving the documents presented.

182. *First National Conversation on Creative Economy for private sector representatives in Angola, 6 October 2020.* The First National Conversation was held to enable private sector stakeholders to express their views over the first phase of the project lifecycle and to present for discussion and feedback the following documents: i) Mapping of the creative industries in Angola; b) two technical notes: (I) The International Dimension of the Cultural and Creative Industries: Image, Export and Investment, and (II) Cultural and Creative Tourism; and c) An Action Plan including measures to be adopted jointly by the Angolan Government, cultural and creative entrepreneurs, associations, foundations and private enterprises from other areas that can support the cultural and creative industries. Valuable comments and feedback were provided by the stakeholders directed to improving the documents presented.

2. Voluntary sustainability standards

183. **Development context.** With global demand for nature-based, healthy, eco-friendly, and socially correct products on the rise among consumers, major retailers increasingly opt for products that claim to be sustainable. One way a product can claim to be sustainable is by carrying eco-labels that confirm products meet voluntary sustainability standards (VSS). Such norms and standards aim to ensure that a product in question is produced, processed or transported in accordance with certain sustainability qualities, such as minimal or zero environmental impacts. Around 500 voluntary sustainability standards exist today for the key exports of many developing countries, such as coffee, tea, bananas, cocoa, palm oil, timber, cotton and organic agri-foods. These norms and standards are developed by bodies such as Fairtrade International, the Marine Stewardship Council and the Rainforest Alliance.

184. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD undertakes analyses, builds the capacities of countries and provides a forum for intergovernmental discussion and consensus-building on the impact of voluntary sustainability standards on market access and market entry conditions facing exports from developing countries. It facilitates collaboration among interested United Nations agencies on supporting developing countries in strengthening national capacities to address voluntary sustainability standards and in conducting analysis on the trade and development implications of such standards. It also supports developing countries in making use of such standards, including through capacity-building programmes, in promoting trade in a manner that brings about economic, social and environmentally sustainable benefits.

185. **Outputs.** Under the project “Fostering Green Exports through Voluntary Sustainability Standards”, implemented in three developing countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, namely, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Vanuatu, the voluntary sustainability standards assessment toolkit has been developed and

made available on the website²² together with its Notes²³, and a supporting document “Framework for the Voluntary Sustainability Standards Assessment Toolkit”²⁴. The Toolkit was designed to collect evidence in the field on the opportunities and challenges faced by actors with respect to voluntary sustainability standards in value chains with green export potential. The final report “Fostering green exports through Voluntary Sustainability Standards: The UNCTAD Approach”²⁵ provides key findings from the implementation of this project. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions, the national multi-stakeholder meetings in the Philippines and the regional peer-review meeting, planned for March 2020, were unfortunately cancelled.

186. Within the framework of the United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS), supported by UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the following activities were implemented in 2020:

(a) UNFSS published its 4th flagship report *Scaling up Voluntary Sustainability Standards through Sustainability Public Procurement and Trade Policy*, which derived from the discussions concluded from the 2nd International Convention on Sustainable Trade and Standards (ICSTS) which was held in Rio de Janeiro on 16-18 September 2019. VSS National Platforms, government officials and private stakeholders, consumers and producers raised the importance of sustainable public procurement and trade policy as drivers of sustainability. The 4th Flagship report, supported by the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), is a collaboration between the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies (GGS) which was supported by the Flanders Research Foundation (FWO) and UNFSS. The Report was made available on the UNCTAD website from the 8th of September.²⁶ The UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General had a live interview session with the Catholic University of Leuven where she shared her insights on the achievements made so far on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the challenges ahead, and the role of trade, the private sector and VSS in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.²⁷ The Flagship report was also presented at various events, namely the 8th World Sustainability Forum virtual event on 17 September 2020,²⁸ the Geneva Trade Week on 2 October 2020, and the GreenCo Summit 2020 on 7 October 2020.

(b) UNFSS successfully established the Academic Advisory Council which was inaugurated on the 25th of June 2020 via a 3-hour long structured webinar. The whole exercise of this council is to bring together economists, scientists, lawyers who do think about the world in a different way but who have all the things to teach each other. During this event, the academic experts presented their research areas which could overall be classified under four main categories of interest to the UNFSS: sustainability standards and global governance, development in the field of VSS, impact and effectiveness of VSS, and public-private partnerships for sustainable development. In particular, the experts considered VSS as emerging governance systems and regulation tools, discussed the effectiveness of VSS in achieving social, economic and environmental sustainability, suggested using 2030 Agenda as a guide for the design of VSS and enhancing the diffusion of VSS through public-private partnerships.

(c) UNFSS established the National Platform and Initiative Cooperative Network (NPICN). The NPICN derives from the joint “Declaration of Cooperation on Sustainability Standards Ecosystems between the National Platforms” initiated by the Quality Council of India (QCI) and signed among parties in New Delhi in 2018. This declaration is a call for collaboration among the NPIC across the world to drive knowledge exchanges in the

²² See <https://vssapproach.unctad.org/toolkit/>.

²³ See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctabinf2020d4_en.pdf.

²⁴ See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctabinf2020d5_en.pdf.

²⁵ See https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctab2020d1_en.pdf.

²⁶ See <https://unctad.org/webflyer/scaling-voluntary-sustainability-standards-through-sustainability-public-procurement-and>.

²⁷ The interview is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSqB12yDK0Q&feature=youtu.be>.

²⁸ The recorded session is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLzHWZIkE1o&t=4s>.

governance of sustainability standards systems. Deliberated through the UNFSS NPIC, Standards Malaysia has called upon UNFSS to assist an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) project on the “role and impact of VSS on trade in the APEC region”. This is a six-month project for 2021, which entails a research report, an APEC workshop on VSS and a compendium of best practices. The goal of this project is to lead APEC to the implementation of VSS to achieve sustainable trade.

187. **Results.** The UNCTAD Voluntary Sustainability Standards Assessment Toolkit, which allows the users to visualize the different needs and challenges faced by multi-stakeholders, have been tested in 3 pilot countries, and was made fully available online. In the Philippines, three regional virtual group meetings of multi-stakeholders, organized jointly with the Philippines National Coconut Authority and the Philippines Department of External Trade, contributed to the validation of the national organic virgin coconut oil strategy, derived from using the Toolkit.

188. The United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS) continues to serve as a strong partnership platform to foster inter-agency support for national-level efforts to support national consultations and the development of beneficial voluntary sustainability standards, namely through the NPICN. Activities related to such standards will eventually contribute to substantial understanding among stakeholders on the impacts of domestic and international voluntary sustainability standards on the development of green exports and sustainable development objectives, improving the capacity of multi-stakeholders to jointly design, assess and implement strategic options for making the best use of such standards to develop green and sustainable exports, and facilitating understanding by other countries within regions and beyond on how to make effective use of such standards for sustainable development.

3. Investment trends and issues

3.1. *Technical assistance on data collection on foreign direct investment and activities of multinational enterprises*

189. **Development context.** Scarcity, unreliability and inconsistency in existing data reporting systems can cause severe problems in formulating policies and strategies regarding FDI. There is also a shortage of studies on the role of FDI and its impact on sustainable economic development and contribution to the transfer of technology, human resource development and export performance. In response to recommendations made by the Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building in the Area of FDI: Data Compilation and Policy Formulation in Developing Countries (December 2005) and endorsed by the tenth session of the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues (Geneva, 6–10 March 2006), UNCTAD continues to provide technical assistance in the area of FDI statistics.

190. **Objectives and features.** The overall objective of the project is to increase FDI inflows to developing countries, in particular LDCs, by formulating FDI policies based on quality FDI data and information on multinational enterprises operating in a region or country. This project aims to enhance the capacity of government agencies in these countries to compile, disseminate and analyse data on FDI and multinational enterprise activities by implementing internationally recommended methodological standards and enabling national authorities to maintain high-quality and up-to-date databases. It also intends to strengthen networking among national authorities involved in FDI data compilation and reporting and in FDI policy issues and investment promotion activities, to facilitate the exchange of experience.

191. **Outputs.** Technical assistance focused on improving FDI data collection methodologies through verification of data sent by national authorities and standardization, by requesting countries to report FDI data based on directional basis rather than asset or liability basis, showing a synergy between research in the *World Investment Report* and *Global Investment Trends Monitor* and technical assistance on improving FDI data.

192. UNCTAD continued inter-agency cooperation in the area of FDI technical assistance by participating online in the Working Group on International Investment

Statistics of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the IMF Balance of Payments Committee and joint European Central Bank/Eurostat Task Force on Foreign Direct Investment. In 2020, UNCTAD also participated in drafting Guiding Notes for the Update of the IMF Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual. In addition, UNCTAD provided technical assistance to improve collection of FDI statistics and activities on multinational enterprises to Seychelles and Indonesia.

193. **Results.** The FDI tables were the most visited UNCTAD web pages as measured by UNCTADstat in 2020, accounting for almost one fifth (17.5 per cent) of all pageviews.

3.2. *Technical assistance on investment reports*

194. **Development context.** An important pillar of UNCTAD activities is to support developments in member countries through analytical work and technical cooperation. In this context, UNCTAD has been providing technical assistance to ASEAN for the preparation of the annual ASEAN Investment Report since 2012. The ASEAN Investment Report (AIR) series provides up-to-date analyses on FDI and operations of multinational enterprises in the region. It also serves as a policy decision-making input and an analytical instrument for improving the competitiveness of ASEAN to attract FDI.

195. **Objectives and features.** The objective of AIR is to present analyses of the latest developments in FDI and the regional investment environment in an integrating ASEAN, including implementing an ASEAN investment work programme in relation to the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. The report aims to provide analytical inputs for discussion by relevant ASEAN bodies of key investment issues and related policy.

196. **Outputs.** In 2020, at the request of ASEAN and considering the usefulness of the annual ASEAN Investment Report to stakeholders, UNCTAD further extended technical assistance to ASEAN for the preparation of the ASEAN Investment Report 2021. Work on the report started in late 2020. A special paper “Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement: a potential boost for investment in sustainable post-COVID recovery” was published in the UNCTAD *Global Investment Trends Monitor* and released on the occasion of the signing of the RCEP Agreement in November 2020. RCEP comprises all the ASEAN member States plus Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea.

197. **Results.** The Agreement to further extend technical assistance for the preparation of AIR was signed in 2020. The special paper on RCEP was released immediately after the signing of the RCEP Agreement and was well received by stakeholders. The report was disseminated widely through online publication, the UNCTAD website, investment networks and to the media. The report was downloaded almost 3,500 times in 2020. Findings of the publication were also discussed in various media, including an interview with Bloomberg and El Financiero Mexico TV on 16 November 2020.

3.3. *World Investment Report series*

198. **Development context.** As the focal point in the United Nations system for investment and technology, UNCTAD promotes understanding of key issues, particularly on FDI-related matters, and assists developing countries in attracting and benefiting from FDI and building their productive capacities and international competitiveness. The World Investment Report series provides up-to-date and comprehensive data on issues pertaining to FDI and multinational enterprises, analyses trends and developments in FDI, examines the implications of activities by multinational enterprises related to these trends, and assesses both international and national policy issues of relevance to developing countries. It serves as a policy decision-making input and an analytical instrument for improving national capacities to attract and benefit from FDI, and as a capacity-building tool.

199. **Objectives and features.** The *World Investment Report* (WIR) series is a key instrument in helping policymakers improve their understanding of emerging FDI-related issues and policy implications for development and, as a result, enhance their ability to formulate FDI policies that will contribute to development objectives. The series therefore

serves as an essential tool for the formulation of FDI policies, which feeds into UNCTAD technical assistance work. The preparation involves the following interrelated activities:

(a) Policy analysis and research: An extensive peer review of the World Investment Report outline, drafts and final text. The preparation of each chapter and section involves dialogue with relevant stakeholders to ascertain facts and determine trends, including with experts (especially those from developing countries), on the topics analysed;

(b) Capacity-building workshops and seminars: These enable policymakers, researchers and other experts from developing countries to directly contribute salient experience, knowledge and information for each *World Investment Report*. As such, these activities constitute a key element of the peer review process;

(c) Dissemination of the report's findings and results: Dissemination begins with the organization of press conferences in national venues and increasingly through webinars on the report's launch date, followed by seminars/workshops for policymakers in developing countries. These workshops allow stakeholders from developing countries to discuss the results of the research and policy analysis, including ways and means of using them in concrete policymaking and implementation; and

(d) Dedicated expert networks: In order to maintain the report's consistent quality, dedicated networks of experts are maintained and supported through a range of activities, including seminars and conferences.

200. **Outputs.** The substantive theme of the *World Investment Report 2020* is international production beyond the pandemic. The report takes stock of COVID-19 crisis, including its impact on FDI and on prospects for international production to 2030. The investment policy chapter looks at investment policy responses to the pandemic, trends in international investment agreement (IIA) and investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) cases and takes stock of efforts being made towards IIA reform. The report also includes a new chapter, added at the request of the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/74/199), on investment in the Sustainable Development Goals, which proposes a set of transformative actions. It was released on 16 June 2020. To facilitate global media coverage, eight sets of press releases were prepared and translated into official United Nations languages. In addition, UNCTAD organized or co-organized seven webinars to disseminate the findings of the *World Investment Report 2020*.

201. **Results.** The *World Investment Report 2020* was presented and discussed at the sixty-seventh session of the Trade and Development Board in September 2020. By the end of 2020, the *World Investment Report 2020*, including overview, factsheets, data and statistics and chapters were downloaded 190,000 times. Its findings were reported in over 1,600 press articles across 93 countries in 17 languages. In 2020, the United Nations General Assembly adopted unanimously a resolution on promoting investments for sustainable development (A/RES/75/207). The resolution acknowledges UNCTAD work in this area and the policy actions proposed in the *World Investment Report 2020* to facilitate a 'Big Push' in private sector investment in the Sustainable Development Goals. The series of webinars serves as a dissemination tool and provides policy recommendations to high-level officials and policymakers. Combined, they gathered more than 10,000 participants and the feedback received was positive:

(a) "...The webinar was helpful by aiding our understanding of global investment trends and the causes which explain the recent observed behaviour in direct investment transactions... [the] accurate representation of the evolution of direct investment and its reasons ... is of great importance for decision-makers." Subdirector, Balance of Payments, Central Bank of the Dominican Republic.

(b) "The presentation of WIR 2020 offered Asian Development Bank participants the most accurate information on FDI for Asia and a timely analysis on the reconfiguration of international production and its implications for investment policy". Extract from the report prepared by the Asian Development Bank following the webinar.

(c) "...Several topics were raised that are crucial for sustainable development in the region and are aligned with our FDI research agenda" Chief, Investment and Corporate Strategies, Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean.

3.4 *Special economic zones in Africa and the AfCFTA*

202. **Development context.** Special economic zones (SEZs) have been increasing in Africa in recent years. However, not all of them are successful and a large number of them remain underutilized. This can lead to unnecessary public costs in the form of unrequited upfront investment in zone infrastructure or foregone tax and customs revenues. Moreover, the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is also set to impact SEZs in Africa significantly depending upon the final decision for the treatment of goods emanating from zones. Currently, a large number of countries on the continent are in need of technical advice and capacity-building for better planning of SEZ regimes, revitalizing underutilized zones, and helping zones adjust to the new trade regime under the AfCFTA.

203. **Objectives and features.** In this context, UNCTAD, with the support of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) will develop a policy handbook to guide governments with respect to SEZ planning and operations, with a particular focus on helping zones adjust to the changes brought in due to the implementation of the AfCFTA. In the second phase of the project, capacity-building events are to be organized to disseminate the findings and policy recommendations of the handbook and train a whole range of stakeholders working on zones in Africa.

204. **Outputs.** In 2020, UNCTAD started research work for the preparation of the handbook that is expected to be completed by June 2021. A survey of approximately 40 zones, from 32 of the total 37 countries that have SEZs in Africa was prepared in 2020. This survey is the first source of detailed information on several dimensions related to SEZs in Africa, including zone types, employment and trade patterns, environmental, labour and corporate social responsibility standards and expectations from the implementation of the AfCFTA. The results of the survey were disseminated to a wide range of SEZ stakeholders during the Annual Meeting of the African Economic Zones Organization on 2 December 2020, organized under the auspices of the African Union.

205. **Results.** The project contributed to the collection of data from a large number of zones on the continent covering a wide variety of issues. In addition, the initial research work that started in 2020 will lead to the development of a comprehensive policy guide, and hence a knowledge resource, for governments and practitioners in Africa to allow them to better plan SEZs and SEZ regimes with a particular emphasis on harnessing the potential of zones for sustainable development.

3.5 *The International Transmission of Gender Policies and Practices: The Role of Multinational Enterprises*

206. **Development context.** Women's economic empowerment is central to the realization of an inclusive and sustainable development as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The private sector plays a pivotal role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and particularly in advancing the position of women in the economy. In this context, multinational enterprises (MNEs) can, through their policies and practices, foster gender equality in the workplace in host developing countries.

207. **Objectives and features.** This report analyses the role of MNEs in transmitting gender equalizing policies and practices across their network of affiliates, and along their supply chains. The main objective is to put forward concrete policies and recommendations that leverage the unique position of foreign groups in supporting women empowerment in the workplace in developing economies, based on solid and novel research.

208. **Outputs.** The report provides policy recommendations based on high-quality academic research on the role of foreign direct investment and multinational enterprises to spread gender equality and female empowerment around the globe. The concrete guidelines and policy recommendations rely on the results from original research produced for the report. The case studies provide evidence across the developing world, focusing on different mechanisms MNEs can influence gender practices in host countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, South Africa and Viet Nam. The report covers important areas where policy can contribute to the positive transmission of labour market practices toward women. Key policy implications arising from the empirical evidence in the report

include: promoting strong local labour policies; facilitating absorptive capacity; fostering linkages between multinational and domestic firms; enhancing transparency in gender-related policy and practice; and encouraging gender provisions to be integrated in international agreements. The report will generate the basis for technical assistance on policy development promoting transmission of positive practices. For that purpose, seminars were conducted in May and September 2020 bringing together practitioners, leading scholars, and researchers from both developing and developed countries, as well as experts from other international organizations such as ECLAC, ESCAP, ECE, ECA, ILO, OECD, UN-Women, the World Bank, and WTO.

209. **Results.** The report was launched at the end of February 2021. It will be a key background document for the high-level policy panel events at the World Investment Forum 2021, including public and private sector stakeholders; and will also serve as technical assistance material for UNCTAD work on gender, FDI and development.

4. Macroeconomic and development policies

4.1. *Development policies for sustainable economic growth in Southern Africa*

210. **Development context.** In recent years, developing countries have again been looking at how they can use development policies more effectively, in some cases to diversify away from commodity dependence or to make more effective use of abundant labour resources, in order to kick-start the process of sustained economic growth from very low levels of income, to break out of a “middle-income trap” or (in a few cases) to push on towards the technological frontier. In Southern Africa, the country that has been using development policies more effectively has undoubtedly been South Africa where the automotive and the clothing- and textile sectors were strategically supported to facilitate a progressive diversification away from mining and energy. Other economies of the region have not been equally successful, however, and are still struggling to find the right policy mix to unleash sustained economic growth. These experiences have added a deeper appreciation of the complexities involved, and the challenges faced by policymakers across the developing world. There is therefore a growing demand to take stock and share the current experiences, and to improve the understanding of approaches that have been successful in promoting structural transformation in different countries.

211. The 2000s also saw a strengthening of South–South economic ties, underpinned by a transformation in the composition of southern exports from primary commodities to manufactures. The regional dimension of these ties is of particular importance. Most of South–South FDI, for example, has been going to Asia (62 per cent of the total in 2011). And most of these flows originate in Asia itself, come from different Asian countries and are invested to support the expansion of the regional production networks, mainly across East and South-East Asia. Compared to Asia, and to other developing regions, South African economies as yet are only weakly integrated through trade and capital flows. This relative backwardness along with the existence of a potential production and growth pole (South Africa) indicates the existence of interesting possibilities to strengthen regional integration and pool resources for advancing structural transformation and increasing competitiveness on the global markets.

212. **Objectives.** This project aims at facilitating the economic cooperation and integration among the 4 developing economies in Southern Africa, Mauritius, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, and around the potential regional economic growth pole (South Africa). In particular it aims at identifying regional value chains and at fostering industrial policy coordination in the region. The project also aims at strengthening the industrial policy framework of each of the target economy in order to create the right environment for regional value chains (RVCs) to thrive and, more in general, foster the progressive diversification of the production and export structures in the region.

213. To achieve these objectives, the project is being deployed over three distinct phases. The first involved the identification of key regional policy priorities and the achievement of regional consensus around this common policy platform. This phase involved background and field research, as well as the organization of regional workshop. The second phase aimed at the building local capacity needed to formulate and implement policies to sustain

industrial development and linking into the identified RVCs. A series of national workshops has been therefore organized in all the target countries involving regional and international experts. The third phase involved key follow-up activities in some of the target economies aimed at the effective formulation and implementation of industrial policy measures.

214. A fourth leg has been added to the project after the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020. A series of studies has been commissioned to analyse the impact of the pandemic and the key responses adopted by the countries of the region and to draw policy lessons. The studies will be collected in a volume.

215. **Outputs.** Since the project started its implementation in June 2016, a series of studies on promising regional value chains in the region has been commissioned, two regional workshops and four national workshops have been organized. The project continued its delivery in 2020 thanks to the extension of project implementation period. During the fall 2020, the “Industrial Policy and Strategic Plan for Mauritius (2020–2025)” was launched, and the studies on the textile sector of the United Republic of Tanzania and on the implementation of the industrial country programme of Mozambique were handed over to the respective Governments. Also, the studies on COVID-19 responses have been prepared and work on the volume is currently under way. Another volume that will be published in October 2021 collects all the background research on RVCs.

216. **Results.** An independent evaluation was carried out between January and April 2021, which made use of an online survey among the participants of project activities. The survey finds that the project has successfully contributed to enhancement of skills for policy development and the target of “75 per cent of participants indicate that they are better able to formulate productive development policies to further economic diversification and structural transformation by using the knowledge gained through the project” has been fulfilled. When asking whether “policymakers in their respective countries have obtained an enhanced understanding on the function of or need for industrial and development policies”, 80 per cent of all survey respondents either “strongly agree” or “agree” with this statement.

217. Furthermore, 80 per cent of the survey respondents belonging to the category of “national authorities” find that the project has led to either a “large improvement” or “some improvement” in their knowledge related to the subject of “economic diversification and structural transformation”. The majority of the policymakers have also been able to apply their new skills acquired from the project for policy development. Indeed, 75 per cent of the survey respondents from the “national authorities” category find that they either to a “large extent” or “some extent” have been able to apply their new skills for policy development.

218. The survey results also support that the project has effectively ensured national ownership of the policy development process and 75 per cent of participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement. Finally, the extension phase of the project seems to have responded well to national needs and requests, thereby the ownership and sustainability has been enhanced.

4.2. *Reclaiming multilateralism for global development*

219. **Development context.** We once had a version of multilateralism that permitted nations to regulate international markets and to pursue strategies for equitable forms of prosperity and development. This system reflected the fact that leaders who believed in managed capitalism and full employment were put in charge after World War II. With their experience of the Great Depression and defeating fascism, they understood that *laissez-faire* led to catastrophe.

220. The system was far from perfect, yet its core principles did provide a rough template for a more balanced form of prosperity in a globally interdependent world. That system began to break down in the late 1970s, when giant global banks, corporations, and their allies in Government regained the reins of power that they had temporarily lost in the Great Depression and the War. Once power was recaptured, these actors rewrote the rules of the global system so that the system became an instrument for the diffusion and enforcement of a neoliberal order that has accentuated crises of financial instability, inequality and climate

change. The project is therefore highly relevant to development, at global, regional and national levels. It is fully in line with the aims of several United Nations conferences and summits and directly linked with the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and the aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 10: Reduced Inequality; Goal 13: Climate Action; and Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goals. The main institutional partner is the Global Development Policy Centre of Boston University (United States of America). The project is resourced by UNCTAD, Boston University and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

221. **Objectives and features.** The project on reclaiming multilateralism for global development aims to contribute to the international debate on globalization and the management of its consequences for developing countries. In doing so, the project aims to generate a collaborative document that critically examines the trends and prospects in the world economy and offers a set of principles for an alternative global cooperation for a sustainable future.

222. **Outputs and results.** In addition to the activities that took place in 2018 and 2019, during 2020, the activities have continued in collaboration with Boston University and Rockefeller Brothers. During August 2020, UNCTAD had organized, in collaboration with the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET), a weeklong virtual Summer School titled “From the transformation of economics to economic transformation: Pathways to a better future”.

223. The COVID-19 crisis has, once again – and arguably even more profoundly – highlighted the disconnect between what makes for healthy communities and what constitutes a healthy economy. Whilst the abrupt work stoppage has forced advanced country Governments into novel support packages for distressed families and there is a good deal of talk about building a better recovery that leaves no one behind, even the massive national packages adopted by Group of 20 countries have focused on bailing out large corporations while the international agenda has failed to provide meaningful support to countries lacking the fiscal and policy space to deal with the health pandemic let alone the deep economic damage resulting from what the IMF has called the “great lockdown”.

224. The 2020 summer school aimed to connect the intellectual challenge of rethinking economic analysis to the practical challenge of building a healthier, more resilient, more equal and greener future for all. The Summer School was attended by more than 500 participants from all over the world during 15–23 August 2020.

225. Additionally, throughout 2020, there had been various seminars and webinars on the Global Green New Deal where the experts of the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies (GDS), and particularly the Director had presented the findings and policy suggestions from the main publication of the project, namely “Geneva principles for a Global Green New Deal”.

4.3. *South–South Integration and the Sustainable Development Goals: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative*

226. **Development context.** Even after achieving better growth performances since the turn of the millennium, developing countries still face multiple challenges in economic and social advancement, which calls for an appropriate policy response at all levels. However, effective and development-friendly policy formulation requires local knowledge, experience and strong capacity. In this regard, experience sharing and capacity-building has become increasingly important as it can improve the policymaking capability of developing countries in identifying key binding constraints, external vulnerabilities and drivers of structural transformation in sustaining dynamic growth so as to reshape better economic and social policies. In contrast to learning experiences from developed countries, peer learning among developing countries could play a distinctive role given similar challenges and opportunities faced by the South in today’s globalized world.

227. Against this backdrop, this project facilitates peer learning from the successful structural transformation experience of China among the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) partner countries. The BRI initiated by China provides a unique opportunity to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing among southern countries in building a community of

shared future. On the one hand, while many developing countries are still struggling with their development challenges, China has progressed rapidly in past four decades. Its annual GDP growth rate has recorded as 9.5 per cent on average and has lifted over 700 million people out of poverty since 1978. It has been widely acknowledged that the effective development policy of China is essentially attributed to its policy experimentation and adaptation to the local circumstance, which can provide a reference point for other developing countries when they design their growth policies. On the other hand, BRI has mobilized enormous development financing resources through trade, FDI, debt, infrastructure financing, technology transfer, industrialization cooperation, and so on, which also provides a “learning-by-doing” opportunities beyond the projects per se as operating and managing those projects inevitably involve knowledge and experience sharing among all BRI partner countries.

228. **Objectives.** This project addresses the growing realization that meeting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals is inextricably linked with the process of structural transformation. The project takes an innovative South–South approach to capacity-building by distilling lessons from a country with first-hand experience in the transformation process, and which is engaged in an ambitious foreign economic policy centred on cross-regional infrastructure connectivity and productive investment known as the Belt and Road initiative. Beyond BRI’s headline investment figures, the large number of developing countries involved in the initiative means that it carries deeper implications for South-South economic cooperation and integration. Of the six economic corridors that constitute BRI, four solely involve developing countries. Despite the great development potential from BRI, however, limitations in government capacity in many partner countries – particularly in the policy areas of investment, trade, finance/debt, and technology – could constrain or even block the potential transformative impacts of the BRI (and of foreign direct investment more generally). The main objective of the project is therefore to enhance the capacity of developing countries to strengthen their policies for structural transformation through learning from successful experiences of other developing countries, particularly from China. The project has identified three initial pilot developing countries: Ethiopia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. To unlock the transformative effects of BRI engagement, partner countries can find guidance and encouragement from a deeper understanding of past and current policy reform experiences of China – experiences which allowed China to not only attain the Sustainable Development Goal predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, but to go well beyond them.

229. **Outputs.** Implementation of the project started in January 2019, and a series of papers were undertaken as outputs of the project on policies of China which helped in its structural transformation, particularly in areas of macro and financial policies; industry and trade policies; digital policies; and debt management policies. The project also organized a workshop for high level officials from the pilot countries in Indonesia to discuss policy experiences of China and existing policies in other developing countries. The report of the meeting documents the discussions which focused on how policies of China can be tailored to the existing policies in the pilot countries in the identified areas. The project also organized high level panels in Second High-Level conference on South-South (BAPA+40) to discuss the ways in which other developing countries can benefit from this project and the need to disseminate the outputs of this project more widely through a platform was also identified. The project subsequently launched UNCTAD BRI Platform to share successful structural transformation policies more widely with developing countries. Through the project, an online national consultative meeting, on 18–19 November 2020, was successfully organized to discuss Indonesian policy papers. Four policy papers of Indonesia in the areas of macro and finance, trade, industry and the digital economy were uploaded on the BRI Platform. The papers highlight the key learning from the experience of China and how these can be tailored to fit into the existing policies of Indonesia.

230. The UNCTAD BRI Platform hosts four policy papers for Indonesia in the areas of macroeconomics and finance, trade, industry and digital economy. These papers identify policy lessons from China which can be adapted by Indonesia in its policies with respect to these four areas. The project is in the process of completing the papers for Sri Lanka as well as for Ethiopia which will then be hosted on the BRI Platform.

231. The project is also preparing a book on lessons from China for structural transformation, which will support the wider dissemination of the results of the project.

232. **Results.** It is too early to measure the results of the project. But the launch of UNCTAD BRI Platform for sharing successful structural transformation policies of the project is a sustainable output of the project. This will continue even after the project is over and will be a platform which will bring BRI and other developing countries together and develop soft linkages among them so as to facilitate policy sharing for sustainable development.

5. International cooperation on science, technology and innovation under the auspices of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Activities related to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development with regard to follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society

233. **Development context.** The World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005) was the first major United Nations event that discussed the potential opportunities and developmental impacts posed by information and communications technology. The Summit established a vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society. In 2015, this vision was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in the outcome document of its overall review of implementation of Summit outcomes. The years since the Summit have seen significant changes in the nature of the information society. Technologies which were in their infancy at the beginning of this century have become mainstream, and in some cases already been displaced by later innovations. Digital innovations are transforming lives and offering new opportunities to reinforce and invigorate efforts to achieve the Goals. However, effective policy development and programmes are required to realize the potential of information technology to enhance development, inclusion and empowerment, and to address the potential harms.

234. **Objectives and features.** A trust fund was established in December 2007 aimed at supporting the work of the Commission in assisting the Economic and Social Council in the system-wide follow-up to World Summit on the Information Society outcomes. The objective of the work of UNCTAD, as the secretariat of the Commission, is to support the work of the Commission as mandated by the Council in its resolution 2006/46. The Council guides the work of the Commission in this area through its annual resolution on the assessment of progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to Summit outcomes. The resources of the trust fund support the elaboration of the annual reports on the implementation of such outcomes and the participation of experts and non-State stakeholders in the work of the Commission, and other related activities.

235. **Outputs.** The secretariat concentrated its efforts in two main areas: supporting the Commission in its mandate related to the follow-up of the implementation of Summit outcomes; and supporting the Commission on the implementation of the request made by the General Assembly in the outcome document of its overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit (General Assembly resolution 70/125).

236. As part of its activities to support the follow-up of the implementation of Summit outcomes, in 2020, UNCTAD invited inputs from United Nations entities and other stakeholders that act as facilitators of the implementation of Summit action lines, as well as from other relevant stakeholders. UNCTAD received inputs from 29 United Nations entities, other international organizations and stakeholders. Based on this information and other relevant sources, UNCTAD prepared the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels. The report highlights major activities to implement Summit outcomes undertaken by stakeholders in 2020.

237. **Results.** The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2020/12, noted the role of the Commission in assisting the Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of progress made in implementing Summit outcomes. The extension and reaffirmation of the mandate given to the Commission by the

Council in its resolution 2006/46 demonstrates the recognition of the valuable work carried out by the Commission. This work has been strengthened due to the support of the Trust Fund.

II. Theme B: Tackling vulnerabilities, building resilience

238. Poor people or nations are more vulnerable to external shocks. Eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require joint and persistent efforts to tackle the specific challenges faced by weak and vulnerable economies. To build their economic resilience, structurally weak economies need to develop sound strategies to diversify economies and build productive capacity. To combat climate change, it is important to develop climate-resilient transport infrastructure and identify best approaches to mitigate climate change while enhancing economic development prospects.

239. UNCTAD technical assistance addresses the specific demand from LDCs, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and post-conflict States to help them better tackle vulnerabilities and build resilience. In particular, UNCTAD improves the capacities of developing countries to effectively manage debt; supports commodity-dependent developing countries in their diversification efforts; promotes sustainable and resilient transport; and assists LDCs in trade policymaking, market access and achieving structural progress towards and beyond graduation.

240. In this section, six products under the theme “Tackling vulnerabilities, building resilience” are reported on. The reports highlight the main technical cooperation activities carried out in 2020 and key results to date. Technical cooperation projects that are pertinent to the aforementioned theme but not linked with any of the existing products under this thematic area are reported on under “B99 Other”.

B1 Support to graduation from least developed country status

Table B1

Support to graduation from least developed country status

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ROA-1819 (F11)	Helping LDCs achieve structural economic progress toward and beyond graduation	2018–	Development Account
ROA-1819 (I11)	Strengthening services trade policymaking for Africa’s integration into regional value chains in support of the 2030 Agenda	2018–	Development Account

241. **Development context.** Helping least developed countries (LDCs) achieve structural economic progress toward and beyond graduation from LDC status is an important goal of UNCTAD. After 50 years of LDC history, six countries have graduated from LDC status: Botswana in 1994, Cabo Verde in 2007, Maldives in 2011, Samoa in 2014, Equatorial Guinea in 2017 and Vanuatu in 2020.

242. Four LDCs are currently earmarked by the United Nations for graduation, each one with an established exit date: Bhutan in December 2023; Angola in February 2024; Sao Tome and Principe in December 2024; and Solomon Islands in December 2024.

243. During the triennial review of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) held in February 2021, the CDP recommended the following LDCs for graduation: Bangladesh, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Nepal. At the same time, the CDP deferred its recommendation on the following countries: Myanmar and Timor-Leste. After a first observation of their progress under graduation criteria, another five States were, in the 2021

review of the list of LDCs, considered pre-eligible for graduation: Cambodia, Comoros, Djibouti, Senegal and Zambia.

244. Tuvalu and Kiribati were recommended for graduation by the CDP in 2012 and 2018, respectively. Yet neither of these two recommendations was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (a question deferred to July 2021). During the 2021 triennial review of the list of LDCs, these recommendations were reiterated by the CDP.

245. This brings to 20 the number of cases or potential cases of graduation making up the United Nations history of periodic reviews of the list of LDCs.

246. The increasing servicification of economies worldwide implies that services are now an important piece of the development puzzle, and most certainly, part of COVID-19 recovery efforts. There is a need to unlock the full potential of Africa's services sector, assess its contribution to economic performance and understand the linkages to the productive sectors to support timely policy-making processes at a time when the continent has embarked on services trade liberalization under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

247. Unlocking the potential of services trade requires that the potential is understood and supported in African policy-making processes. A major challenge in this regard is assessing the contribution of the services sector in the economy and understanding the complexity of global and regional services value chains which are essential for services to thrive. The UNCTAD and Economic Commission for Africa project endeavours to address this disparity. In particular, it proposes to strengthen capacities to measure the value added that is generated by the services sector and the degree to which developing this sector may improve the tradability of goods and services, and to support developing the necessary policy frameworks to enable the sectors growth. With the onset of covid-19, the project has also assessed the impact of the pandemic on specific services trade sectors (transport, tourism and financial services), and the prospects for a sustainable recovery.

248. **Objective.** Supporting the quest of graduating LDCs for a "smooth transition" to post-LDC status has been a key objective of UNCTAD over the past two decades. Helping LDCs "graduate smartly" (the objective of UNCTAD Toolbox, product B1) is a two-pronged technical assistance programme. It is designed to: (a) cast light, for the benefit of every graduating State, on the factors that justify graduation, or conversely on the factors that would make graduation a premature decision; and (b) help the same country, once it has become a graduation case officially, organize its quest for a smooth transition to post-LDC life.

249. In this vein, UNCTAD advisory services involve helping the Governments of graduating LDCs make the anticipated change of country status an opportunity to examine the extent to which continuation or a smooth phasing-out of important LDC benefits is desirable. A key facet of this technical assistance often involves helping policymakers prepare for negotiations with relevant development or trading partners.

250. **Outputs.** In 2020, UNCTAD provided technical assistance to five LDCs facing the challenge of graduation from LDC status: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Solomon Islands.

Three revised country-specific vulnerability profiles

251. In accordance with a mandate from the General Assembly, UNCTAD prepares a "Vulnerability Profile" for every LDC which has been found pre-eligible for graduation, to provide the Government with insights into the particular vulnerabilities or fragilities of the country, and into the implications of these disadvantages. The profile helps national authorities understand the critical relationship between the need for resilience-building action, and "country status" as a basis for eligibility for special support to this action.

252. In order to bolster the usefulness and comprehensiveness of the vulnerability profiles (VPs), in 2020 UNCTAD decided to launch a new generation of vulnerability profiles, geared towards widening and deepening the analysis contained in the VPs. While the traditional VPs were focused on the performance of countries against the LDC criteria, the revised framework is organized around four pillars: (a) a situation analysis;

(b) identification of key areas of vulnerability; (c) evaluation of the consequences of identified vulnerabilities; (d) identification of structures and features of the economy that are critical for a sustainable graduation and for reducing existing vulnerabilities. They include topics such as the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, pervasive informality, inequalities and gender issues. These elements are aligned with the five Ps (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership) of the Sustainable Development Goals. The new-generation VPs conclude with suggestions for the main elements of a national strategy of graduation with momentum, as first suggested in *The LDC Report 2016*.

253. The new generation of VPs uses tools such as the UNCTAD Productive Capacities Index (PCI) and the product space developed by the University of Harvard. The new generation of vulnerability profiles is forward-looking. The identified vulnerabilities provide the key bases for the formulation of a strategy of graduation with momentum.

254. According to this revised approach UNCTAD prepared in 2020 the first three of the new generation of VPs, namely for the following countries: Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

255. Having prepared a draft version of the revised VPs, the LDC Section shared it with national governments and organized a technical working meeting with national officials to discuss the said drafts and received comments, suggestions and corrections, as follows:

(a) UNCTAD actively participated in the first interactive briefing on graduation with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on 8 September 2020. UNCTAD made a presentation on vulnerabilities that the country needs to tackle at present and along the graduation process. This includes, economic, social, environmental and health vulnerabilities, which will not be abolished once the country graduates from the LDC category. Much of the discussion concerned the process of graduation itself and its modalities. The virtual meeting was organized by the national government with the backing of the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (RCO). It has also the participation of the other following agencies: RCO, UN-OHRLS, CDP Secretariat, UNESCAP;

(b) On 19 November 2020 UNCTAD held a meeting with 15 officials from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, including the Ministries of Planning, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Industry, Health and the national statistics office. They provided a series of comments and suggestions, which were supplemented by subsequent written comments. All of these elements were later incorporated into the final version of the VP;

(c) On 20 November 2020 UNCTAD held a meeting with 20 officials from Myanmar, including the Ministries of Planning, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Trade and the Permanent Representative in Geneva. They provided comments and suggestions, which were supplemented by subsequent written comments sent to the Section. All of these elements were later incorporated into the final version of the VP;

(d) On 27 November 2020 UNCTAD held a meeting with seven officials from the Ministries of Finance and Trade of Bangladesh, and the Task Force on Implementation of LDC Graduation Road Map. The national officials expressed their appreciation of the draft VP and made remarks on national concerns and priorities concerning the graduation process.

National workshop in Bangladesh

256. On 10 December 2020 the LDC Section co-organized with the Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh the national workshop on the vulnerability profile of the country, which UNCTAD had prepared according to the framework of the new generation of VPs. Titled "Helping Bangladesh make graduation a milestone of continued economic progress", it provided a forum for awareness raising, information sharing, policy dialogue, and debates on the best strategies for smooth transition and structural transformation. It had the participation of more than 80 people, including all the main stakeholders of the country's graduation process: government agencies (Ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Industries, Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Shipping, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Cultural Affairs, Disaster Management and Relief; Planning Commission; Central Bank; National Board of Revenue; Bangladesh Investment Development Authority; Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks), private sector (federation of industries,

textiles and garments, pharma, leather goods, agro-processing), research organizations (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Policy Research Institute, Bangladesh Foreign Trade institute, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies), development partners (United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNDP, European Union, World Bank, USAID, the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Asian Development Bank) and civil society. Participants praised the UNCTAD VP as a source of sound analysis that is useful for policymakers and for planning processes. They were very engaged and actively participated in discussions with UNCTAD staff. The main issues discussed were: the impact of the phasing out of international support measures (ISMs), outlook for the country's manufacturing sector (especially textiles and clothing, and pharma), policy priorities to reduce vulnerabilities, development of the private sector, the negotiation agenda between Bangladesh and its development partners, the importance of formulating a smooth transition strategy. The meeting concluded with Bangladeshi officials expressing the Government's hope for continued collaboration between the country and UNCTAD in the graduation process.

Assisting Bhutan and Solomon Islands in their smooth transition strategy

257. The LDC Section assisted the government of Bhutan in the preparation of a Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) for the country's graduation out of the LDC category. UNCTAD prepared a revised and upgraded version of a white paper. It provides analytical elements which serve as background for the preparation of the country's STS. It then submitted the revised white paper to the national government, the United Nations country office and the UNDP country office. Additionally, UNCTAD assisted the Government of Bhutan in the preparation of its submission to the CDP concerning the process of preparation of an STS.

258. UNCTAD extended its assistance to graduating countries also to the Solomon Islands. It participated in a meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on LDCs on the Solomon Islands held on 11 November 2020. It was convened to discuss which activities different agencies (from the United Nations or otherwise) will undertake to accompany the country in its post-graduation path, and to craft a common programme of work in response to the request of the Government of Solomon Islands for coordinated support from all its development partners at the United Nations and other organizations. UNCTAD recalled its involvement with the country through the Vulnerability Profile, graduation with momentum, productive capacities, the PCI, structural transformation, and how these elements could provide useful inputs and recommendations in designing the Solomon Islands STS.

Achievements from recent activities in services trade and complementary, ongoing activities

259. The UNCTAD-UNECA "Strengthening services trade policymaking for Africa's integration into regional value chains in support of the 2030 Agenda" project aims to support six African countries (including four LDCs: Ethiopia, the Gambia, Mali and Togo) and regional economic communities with tools and methodologies to gain a better understanding of services value chains in three selected key services sectors (financial, tourism and transport services) which are critical to enable trade and, at the same time, can generate important sources of income and sustainable livelihoods for Africans.

Studies on COVID-19 impacts and recovery responses

260. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the extreme vulnerability of African economies, and especially the services sector to global markets. The sector, from tourism and transportation to financial services, has severely contracted due to compressed demand for goods, as well as services, and disrupted supply chains. The imperative today is that African countries need to address the challenges induced by the pandemic to build stronger and more resilient economic sectors. This entails undertaking targeted studies on the sectoral impacts of COVID-19 that will, in turn, help countries design appropriate policies and take corrective action to build back better in the short run, and advance more sustainably in the medium to long run. In this context, and within the scope of this project, UNCTAD and UNECA have assisted the beneficiary countries to assess the impacts of the

pandemic on their services sector and devise appropriate response strategies. From late 2020, data collection, mainly through online surveys has been carried out in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Togo.²⁹

National seminar to review the study on “Examining Road Transport Services in Kenya: A Case Study for the Tea Value Chain”, Nairobi, 19 December 2020

261. Under the scope of the project, a case study was commissioned in collaboration with the Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development of Kenya. The study analysed the contribution of the road transport sector in tea value chains of Kenya and recommended a set of policy options needed to strengthen the linkages. To rigorously review the key findings of the study and discuss its policy recommendations, the Ministry, in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNECA, organized a validation workshop on 19 November 2020. The workshop was attended by key stakeholders, mainly policy makers and private sector representatives, in the transport and tea sectors of Kenya, among others. The workshop took place in Nairobi under hybrid modalities. Participants located in Nairobi attended the meeting in person. Those located outside Kenya participated through a dedicated virtual platform.

262. **Results.** The three revised vulnerability profiles have helped relevant national authorities better grasp the key elements of success which have led them to closer to graduation thresholds, but also the main shortcomings of the strategies pursued so far. They have also been instrumental in planning for the next steps in the path towards smooth transition.

263. The studies on COVID-19 impacts and recovery responses will support countries to thoroughly analyse the COVID-19 impacts at national and regional levels by focusing on the target services sectors. It is anticipated that this will shed light on the policy responses required to ensure the sectors remain part of inclusive and sustainable recovery strategies³⁰.

264. At present, the studies on the Ethiopian transport sector and Malian tourism have been completed, and are currently being edited. Validation workshops of these studies have taken place in Ethiopia (June 2021) and are being rolled-out throughout July and August in the Gambia and Mali. They have been welcomed by the ministries that requested this additional support from the project.

265. The seminar on road transport services in Kenya provided opportunities to review some of the challenges the transport services of Kenya face, as well as potential solutions to maximize its contributions to other sectors, especially tea value chains. During the seminar, the Secretary of Trade of Kenya reiterated the need to better understand services value chains to maximize their full potential. He noted that “a major challenge to address relates to the extent to which we fully understand how such value chains operate, to measure them and design policies to support a higher degree of integration”. He acknowledged UNCTAD and UNECA support in addressing some of those issues through the current project.

²⁹ Although the Gambia is one of the project’s beneficiaries, the country is not participating in the COVID-19 impacts and recovery responses component of the project, due to previous commitments.

³⁰ See http://knowledge.uneca.org/stp/covid-19_Impacts_and_Responses.

B2 DMFAS – Debt Management and Financial Analysis System

Table B2
DMFAS – Debt Management and Financial Analysis System

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/0T/2AO	Strengthening the debt management capacity of developing countries	2002–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/HCB	Strengthening Public Debt Management in Selected Low and Middle-Income countries	2018–	Switzerland
INT/0T/IAB	The Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) Programme	2019–	European Union
ANG/0T/EBG	Fortalecimiento de la capacidad de gestión de la deuda pública (Angola)	2015–	Angola
BOL/0T/HCA	Implementación del SIGADE y fortalecimiento de las capacidades en gestión de la deuda en el Banco Central de Bolivia	2018–	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
ECU/0T/IAG	Utilización del SIGADE 6 para la gestión de la deuda pública (Ecuador)	2019–	Ecuador
ETH/0T/HBA	Public Finance Management (PFM): DMFAS Ethiopia	2018–	Ethiopia
GBS/0T/FBH	Fortalecimiento de la capacidad de gestión de la deuda pública (Guinea-Bissau)	2017–	World Bank
HON/0T/BAU	Strengthening public debt management (Honduras)	2015–	United Nations Development Programme
IVC/0T/BCF	Projet de modernisation des outils informatiques et de renforcement des capacités de gestion de la dette SYGADE 6 (Côte d’Ivoire)	2013–	Côte d’Ivoire
LAO/0T/IBR	DMFAS 6 upgrade for Lao PDR	2020–	World Bank
PAR/0T/IBQ	Asistencia en la implementación de la interfaz SIGADE SIARE Paraguay	2020–	Paraguay
PHI/0T/ABK	Strengthening debt management in the Bureau of the Treasury (Philippines)	2011–	Philippines
PHI/0T/HAO	DMFAS 6 implementation	2019–	Philippines
SUD/0T/IAC	Strengthening Public Debt Management in Sudan	2019–	Sudan
UGA/0T/GBC	Strengthening Integrated Debt Management Uganda	2020–	Uganda
ZAM/0T/BDA	Strengthening integrated public debt management (Zambia)	2012–	Zambia

266. **Development context.** Effective debt management is an intrinsic part of sound public financial management and overall good governance. It is crucial for ensuring sustainable debt levels, identifying risks of debt crises and limiting their impact.

267. The critical role of debt and good debt management has been underlined in Goal 17.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which recognizes the importance of assisting developing countries to attain long-term debt sustainability and reducing the risk of debt distress. Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly³¹ has emphasized “that debt sustainability is essential for underpinning growth, underlining the importance of debt sustainability, debt transparency and effective debt management to the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. It also reiterated “that timely and comprehensive data on the level and composition of debt are necessary for, inter alia, building early warning systems aimed at limiting the impact of debt crises”.

268. The effective management of public resources and liabilities has become even more necessary in the face of increasing pressures on public finances and increased borrowing to meet COVID-19 public spending-related demands. The economic fallout from the pandemic has accentuated growing concerns about the overall outlook for external debt sustainability in developing countries.

269. The new financial vulnerabilities and increased risks of debt distress faced by developing countries, particularly the poorest, as a result of the COVID-19 health and economic crises, reinforce the need for effective debt management as an intrinsically important component of Public Financial Management. The effective management of public resources and liabilities has become even more necessary in the face of increasing pressures on public finances and increased borrowings to meet COVID-19 public spending-related demands.

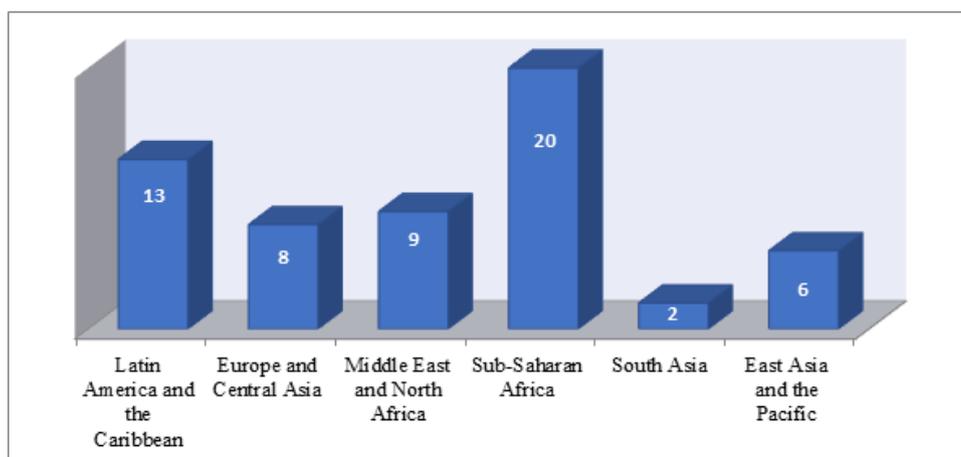
270. In the face of this growing concern about the overall outlook for external debt sustainability, debt data transparency is more essential than ever. Effective debt management is also critical for the effective implementation of the emergency financing and debt moratorium measures adopted by the international community as a response to the COVID-19 crisis.

271. In 2020, the DMFAS Programme quickly adapted its support to respond to countries’ changing requirements as they faced the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis.

272. Programme objectives. The DMFAS Programme is a leading provider of technical cooperation and advisory services in the area of debt management. It offers a set of proven solutions to improve the capacity of beneficiary countries to manage public debt, handle the day-to-day management of public liabilities, produce reliable debt data and perform basic debt analysis for policymaking purposes. The Programme works directly with 58 countries (see figure 1).

³¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 75/205 on external debt sustainability and development, adopted on 29 December 2020.

Figure 1
Geographical distribution of active DMFAS users, 2020



273. **Outputs.** In 2020, the DMFAS Programme continued to provide effective support to the 58 countries actively using its software. Most of debt management offices moved to teleworking hence the Programme provided increased online support for remote access to the DMFAS system and supported its 58 user countries for the effective recording, monitoring and reporting of public debt, and for performing debt operations. Remote delivery of technical support and capacity-building activities also replaced traditional face-to-face training when it became impossible due to travel restrictions.

274. The Programme delivered country-specific technical assistance and trained 361 debt officers, of which 45 per cent were women, from 26 countries through 26 capacity-building activities in the field or remotely. Increased remote support included support to set up remote access to DMFAS databases and through its help desk, which responded to 223 requests during the reporting period. During the year, the Programme actively managed 30 active technical assistance projects and signed three new projects and two addenda to existing projects.

275. The Programme worked in close cooperation with other international bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional institutions, to enhance coordination and avoid duplication. For example, in 2020, the Programme co-delivered activities with the IMF technical assistance centres in South Asia and Central America.

276. **Results.** For the DMFAS client countries, concrete and sustainable results included improved external and domestic debt data recording, enhanced reporting and improved debt analysis capacities in line with the recording and reporting components of the public financial management value chain as defined under the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Programme. The Programme's main results are highlighted below:

(a) Complete, reliable and up-to date databases: Ninety-five per cent of countries have developed comprehensive and reliable debt databases in respect of government and government-guaranteed external debt. Seventy-five per cent of DMFAS 6 user-countries whose debt management office is responsible for monitoring domestic debt were using DMFAS to manage their entire domestic debt portfolio.

(b) Improved production of debt statistics: Forty countries regularly produce statistical bulletins on debt.

(c) Strengthened analytical skills: Twenty-five countries regularly produce a debt portfolio analysis.

(d) Improved capacity for effective debt reporting: the pandemic has impacted the capacity of countries to fulfil their reporting requirements, and 84 per cent of DMFAS client countries with low or middle-income levels effectively reported to the World Bank through the Debtor Reporting System. In 2020, 73 per cent of DMFAS clients participating in the World Bank Quarterly External Debt Statistics database reported on a timely basis.

(e) **Financing:** The Programme worked actively with current donors to agree on new multi-year commitments and reached out to potential new donors.

(f) **Results-based management (RBM):** The DMFAS Programme applies comprehensive RBM to its strategic planning and project implementation. This includes clearly defining the objectives, results, measurable indicators and means of verification that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress. It also defines the assumptions that represent the pre-requisites for the achievement of the expected results, and the associated risks. Where applicable, baselines are used to benchmark progress over time. 2020 is the first year of implementation of the new 4-year strategic plan for the period 2020–2023. In 2020, report of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) on technical cooperation in UNCTAD noted that “good practices of results-based planning were evident such as the use of effectiveness indicators to develop the DMFAS Strategic Plan 2016–2019”. The report also stated that “good practices of results-based management were evident such as for the DMFAS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework”. The MOPAN report pointed out that “on the DMFAS programme, there is evidence that strategic planning is based on both constituent priorities and informed by the latest innovation, good practice, needs to support programme evolution and feedback from key stakeholders at other agencies”.³²

B4 UNCTAD contribution to the Enhanced Integrated Framework

Table B4

UNCTAD contribution to the Enhanced Integrated Framework

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
RAF/OT/JAU	Facilitation du transit, du transport et des échanges en Afrique de l’Ouest pour une meilleure participation aux chaînes de valeurs	2020–	Enhanced Integrated Framework
RAS/OT/JBL	EIF – Regional Project “A New Trade Policy and Strategy for ASEAN LDCs on market access and related issues”	2020–	Enhanced Integrated Framework

277. **Development context.** The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) is a multi-agency and multi-donor program for the coordinated delivery of trade related technical assistance and institutional capacity-building for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). It aims at enabling LDCs to mainstream trade into their national development plans, so that countries can mobilize the potential of trade to promote economic growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction at the domestic level and to become more active players in the multilateral trading system. In this context, UNCTAD continues to actively participate in the EIF Board by contributing to the LDC friendly operationalization of the EIF. In addition, UNCTAD assists the LDCs both in terms of capacity-building for the ownership of the EIF through its Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) updating process and by providing the trade policy, the market access and the strategy advisory services.

278. **Objectives/Features.** UNCTAD provides tailored assistance in response to specific requests from EIF participating countries. The main objectives of the technical assistance are the capacity-building of LDCs for a better integration into multilateral trade and for their development through the DTIS studies, trade policy, market access, etc. In providing such assistance, UNCTAD uses a mix of national and international expertise to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and maximize results – the approach also contributes to national capacity-building.

³² MOPAN 2019 Assessments: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Published June 2020. Available at <http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unctad2019/>.

279. **Outputs.** In 2020, UNCTAD provided the technical assistance in several LDCs, notably Benin, Burkina Faso and the Niger, through a regional project on transit, transport and trade facilitation; in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic by developing and implementing a regional project on “A New trade policy and strategy for ASEAN LDCs on market access and related issues”.

West African Countries: Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger

280. The project on “Facilitation of transit, transport and trade in West Africa for better value chain participation” will facilitate adopting a transit modernization plan building on existing regional conventions such as the Interstate Road Transport Convention (ISRT), including specific transport issues and the implementation of specific transit-related articles of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The project will put in place catalytic activities on transit while being part of the general framework of implementing the Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) Programme. These activities will activate measures to be put in place by governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders and deploy their effects over a long-term time horizon beyond the 36-month project duration. Following the Trade Facilitation Agreement that entered into force on 22 February 2017, this project will enable the three beneficiary countries to facilitate transit, alleviate bottlenecks arising from transport-related problems, and improve cooperation between countries at the transit and transport levels. One of the project’s innovative elements is a holistic and coordinated approach using the transit provisions of the TFA as a leverage to achieve the transit facilitation objectives. The budget for this project is \$1.5 million.

281. The last version of the project has been approved by the EIF secretariat in 2021. In 2020, the project successfully created synergies with partners such as the World Bank, GIZ, ECOWAS, and WAEMU to revamp its overall strategies in addressing trade facilitation related issues in the three beneficiary countries. Indeed, in 2020, with the guidance from the EIF secretariat’s recommendations, UNCTAD enhanced the project work plan, logical framework, monitoring and evaluation plan, and budget to reflect not just the on-going related projects in the region but also to alleviate risk from COVID-19, like travel restrictions that could result in low participation of beneficiary countries in project activities.

ASEAN LDCs Countries: Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

282. ASEAN LDCs need to design a coordinated trade policy response to address the challenges that they are faced. These challenges are due to changes in the trade policies of their major trading partners and ASEAN neighbours that affect ASEAN LDC trade opportunities. Thus, there is a need for ASEAN LDCs to redesign a coordinated trade and investment policy response to address these challenges and meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the regional project called “A new trade policy and strategy for ASEAN least developed countries on market access and related issues” will provide targeted research and capacity-building initiatives to support the Ministries of Commerce of Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and WTO delegates of ASEAN LDCs to achieve several outcomes, especially: (a) extended cumulation with the European Union for ASEAN LDCs and improved trade relations on market access; (b) improved Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) of Japan and Japan-ASEAN LDC bilateral trade relations; (c) improved sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures in accessing China and neighbouring markets by leveraging on the WTO SPS committee; and (d) a better understanding of WTO e-commerce negotiations. The budget for this project is \$200,000.

283. The ASEAN LDC Project is at its infancy stage where the start of implementation was at the end of October 2020. Nevertheless, the ASEAN LDC Project has accomplished worthwhile milestones towards its goals. Specifically, the project has successfully completed the following actions and activities: (a) ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) Handbook, (b) road map of sequenced activities on market access, rules of origin, SPS and e-commerce for Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; (c) participation in WTO Committee on Rules of Origin (CRO) meetings, (d) Analysis on rules of origin in Japan’s duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) scheme for the LDCs; and (e) coordination with

the ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the European Union (ARISE) Project to seek complementarities and synergies.

EIF Board Meeting

284. In 2020, UNCTAD participated in a virtual meeting with EIF agencies (WTO and UNDP) to coordinate positions and responses on various agenda items for consideration at the next Board Meeting. On 25 June 2020, UNCTAD participated in the Enhanced Integrated Framework Board meeting organized by the World Trade Organization. The main points of this EIF board meeting were the EIF strategic responses to the COVID-19 crisis, the EIF Programme evaluation, the EIF financial update and the EIF guidelines for Selection of Main Implementing Entities/Sub-Implementing Entities. On 26 November 2020, UNCTAD participated in the Enhanced Integrated Framework Board meeting organized by the World Trade Organization. The main points of this EIF board meeting were (a) overall update of the programme, (b) update on the EIF programme decision, (c) the EIF monitoring and evaluation system and (d) 2021 budgets and work plans.

EIF Working Group

285. In July 2020, UNCTAD participated in discussions with the EIF Board and Secretariat on the EIF's "Guidelines for the Selection of Main Implementing Entities (MIEs) and Sub-implementing Entities (SIEs)". In September 2020, UNCTAD participated in the meeting of the EIF secretariat, which focused on the theme of "EIF agility and resilience in COVID-19 – Sharing experiences and lessons learned". In October, UNCTAD participated in the EIF Working Group meetings to review the documents that were subsequently approved at the EIF Board meeting on 26 November 2020.

286. On November 18, UNCTAD also participated in a consultative meeting with EIF agencies to discuss the documents that were submitted to the EIF Board Meeting.

287. **Results.** In 2020, all of these listed activities were carried out by UNCTAD in the context of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). Although efforts are still needed to assist LDCs in their integration into the world trade, an increasing number of least developed countries have made progress in mainstreaming trade policies into their national development plans as well as identified trade-related priorities and implemented their Action Matrices. In addition, LDCs have been increasingly able to identify the main constraints in their participation in the international trade and develop initiatives to foster productive capacities at sub-regional and regional levels.

B5 Market access, rules of origin and geographical indications for the least developed countries

Table B5

Market access, rules of origin and geographical indications for the least developed countries

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ROA-1617 (A10)	Programme on statistics and data	2016–	Development Account

288. **Development context.** Least developed countries (LDCs) are granted preferential tariff treatment in the markets of developed and developing countries under several schemes and arrangements. Among them are initiatives such as the Generalized System of Preferences, the European Union's "Everything but Arms" initiative, the African Growth and Opportunity Act of the United States of America, trade preferences under African, Caribbean and Pacific States–European Union Partnership Agreements and other preferential trading arrangements that have rules of origin as key components. LDCs nonetheless face significant obstacles to market access.

289. UNCTAD provides policy advice and technical assistance to help developing countries comply with requirements on rules of origin under preferential trading arrangements – focusing on product origin – with a view to improving the utilization rates of trade preferences granted to them. Since 2006, for instance, UNCTAD has assisted LDCs that are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the implementation of the 2005 Ministerial Declaration adopted at the WTO Sixth Ministerial Conference (Hong Kong, China) on duty-free and quota-free market access. The declaration called on ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from LDCs are simple and transparent and contribute to facilitating market access. UNCTAD also provides support in relation to the WTO Ministerial Decision (Bali, Indonesia) on preferential rules of origin for LDCs.

290. In addition to assisting the least developed countries on market access regulations, UNCTAD provides support on geographical indications (GIs) to enhance export diversification and specialization. Overcoming the limited diversification of LDC exports, the low value added of those exports and the continued challenge of bringing small local producers up front in the global commodity value chain remain concerns. At the same time, the rich biodiversity of several LDCs allows them to draw on their natural resources to create an array of traditional products and preparations with the potential to compete globally and secure higher returns from sales. Benefiting from that natural wealth can require taking steps to gain recognition of quality and generate a solid reputation for specific products in the eyes of consumers and buyers. One important approach can be using geographical indications in combination with a branding strategy for those products.

291. Unilateral trade preferences, if properly utilized, provides LDCs with a comparative advantage by lowering import tariffs. They are nevertheless not a panacea and competition from alike products is fierce. Adopting a regional branding strategy based on geographical indications could be a viable complementary poverty reduction and environmentally sound policy to commercial and subsistence farming in LDCs. Associated origin conveys a certain reputation of a good and spurs trust resulting from a certain type of collective action. This holds especially true in today's globalized world in which consumers would like to know where the products come from and local producers need therefore to differentiate their products from generic competition. LDCs face considerable challenges at the time when they consider GIs as institutionalization schemes are still precarious: LDC Governments have limited knowledge on GIs, the GI frameworks might not exist or if available, they are incomplete. Moreover, sustainable models of regional branding of agriculture relying on "terroir" might simply be absent or mixed with other models of development farming like organic farming or "fair trade" initiatives. These latter initiatives are not directed at promoting the uniqueness nature of products and its cultural aspects.

292. **Objectives/features.** The main objectives of UNCTAD technical assistance under this programme are to help LDCs better understand the rules and mechanisms of the multilateral trading system in order to access different markets; and to assist rural communities and LDC Governments in enhancing the value of traditional products by exploiting trading opportunities such as geographical indications and facilitating compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary requirement. The principle of country ownership drives UNCTAD technical assistance on rules of origin, market access and geographical indications. For all schemes under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), products exported from a country receiving such preferences must fulfil the rules of origin of the countries granting those preferences.

293. Documenting evidence of compliance with those rules is necessary for products to qualify for preferential tariff treatment. UNCTAD services in support of developing countries and LDCs in this area include (a) providing advice to Governments and the private sector to comply with origin requirements under unilateral (duty free and quota free (DFQF) arrangement) and contractual trade preferences (free trade areas and regional trade agreements); and (b) delivering tailor-made technical assistance, such as advisory memorandums on policy options in drafting and negotiating preferential rules of origin under different trading arrangements. UNCTAD also carries out tailored services in providing LDCs with specific training material on market access trade preference made available under DFQF arrangement and regional trade agreements.

294. Identifying and registering traditional products under a geographical indication requires different steps, such as drafting a “disciplinary of production”, the main text that defines a product’s unique identity. Being able to convey what makes products unique geographically adds value to those products. Such information is also useful for customers who can be attracted to those products when they learn more about them.

295. UNCTAD provides countries with support in identifying products that could be eligible to use geographical indications – signs used on products with a specific geographical origin and possessing qualities or a reputation based on that origin – and in drafting the legal specifications for those products and introducing a branding policy.

296. **Outputs**

WTO LDC Group

297. UNCTAD held a number of informal consultations with the LDC Group at the WTO and other delegations to prepare a draft Ministerial text for the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC-12). After various revisions and inputs from different stakeholders and delegations, a draft text has been delivered by UNCTAD to the WTO LDC Group.

Committee on Rules of Origin

298. On March, UNCTAD provided the LDC Group at the World Trade Organization with background papers and presentations. The inputs were used by the LDC delegates during the WTO Committee on Rules of Origin (CRO) meeting held from 4 to 5 March 2020 in Geneva.

299. Then, in October, UNCTAD provided assistance to the LDC Group at the WTO in preparing the documents for the Next CRO. In particular, a draft ministerial decision on rules of origin has been prepared together with a note on ad valorem percentage criterion. Consultations on the preparation for the forthcoming meeting have been carried out with the WTO LDC Group and the WTO secretariat.

Review of the Revised Kyoto Convention

300. UNCTAD contributed inputs to the revised proposal on the updating of Annex K on rules of origin of the revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). The proposal for the revision of Annex K was developed together with the European Union, China, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and Nissan Renault. As part of the revision of the Kyoto Convention, UNCTAD organized a Consultative Meeting on the Proposal of Annex K on Rules of Origin of Revised Kyoto Convention on 27 November 2020. The consultative meeting has been organized in cooperation with the European University Institute, as part of the Global Governance Programme. Thanks to wide participation and engaging cooperation, the meeting brought together 31 participants from both the private and public sectors. Many private sector stakeholders had previously provided their comments and suggestions on the joint proposal. The consultative meeting allowed for the review of the components of the joint proposal. The meeting provided information on the RKC Revision and the RKC Annex K. Information on the rationale behind the proposal was provided by the European Union. Stakeholders further spoke about the components of the proposal and the relevant private sector inputs/comments, as well as the next steps for this proposal.

Programme on Statistics and Data: Statistics on Merchandise Trade, Trade Preferences and Non-Tariff Measures

301. Under the programme on statistics and data, the 10 United Nations implementing entities worked closely to enhance capacity of developing countries to strengthen statistical institutional environments and production processes across multiple statistical domains to measure, monitor and report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

302. The implementing entities are long-standing and trusted partners of national statistical offices and national statistical systems, and possess considerable technical expertise and experience, which places them in a unique position to provide assistance to countries in the area of statistics and data. The programme provides guidance on

improvements required to strengthen the institutional settings and arrangements within the national statistical offices, including the related statistical business processes. Such guidance will then need to be adapted to the specificities of each country's current official statistical arrangements. The programme also addresses data gaps in specific thematic areas, combining a cross-cutting approach with sector-specific demands, as identified by member States.

303. In 2020, several activities have been implemented by several United Nations entities. UNCTAD for its part has allowed the organization of several activities contributing to the objectives of this program. For example, UNCTAD organized regional training in collaboration with the European University Institute, Florence, to build capacities of Geneva-based and capital-based officials on how to use utilization rates of trade preferences in multilateral/bilateral negotiations. Also, UNCTAD provided advisory services on utilization rate to the LDCs. In 2020, UNCTAD also participated in the World Customs Organization (WCO) workshop of LDCs.

UNCTAD Database on GSP Utilization

304. The GSP Utilization Rate is a website interfacing with a database on utilization rates of trade preferences granted to LDCs. The aim is to provide the private sector and Government in LDCs with detailed information on the utilization rate of trade preferences. This new tool will allow government officials, firms, and researchers to retrieve in a user-friendly manner data on GSP utilization rates as well as imports by tariff treatment. For the time being, the coverage is limited to the QUAD countries (Canada, Japan, the United States and the European Union,) for the period 2004–2018 with 2019 soon to be added. Three functions are fully operational, namely: (1) Utilization by Product which allows to see the evolution of a product – defined as a 2-, 4- or 6-digit Harmonized System (HS) code – imported by a beneficiary country from a preference-giving country (PGC) in terms of GSP Utilization Rate and imports; (2) Top Products Imported from a Beneficiary, allowing government officials and researchers to see which products were the most traded between a beneficiary and a PGC; (3) Utilization by Country, showing utilization rates and imports in terms of HS sections. Since October 2020, UNCTAD has been working in close cooperation with the Information Technology Support Services Section at UNCTAD, in the development of a new front-end for the UNCTAD Database on GSP Utilization. This collaboration is on weekly basis (12 meetings so far) between the two teams to review progress achieved in the previous week and define new milestones for the following week. The UNCTAD Database on GSP Utilization was successfully launched at the end of 2020. This implies that we are still in the process of collecting feedbacks from various users to ascertain its usefulness. Further, we are also gathering feedbacks on how to improve the graphical user interface to better enhance user experience.

Handbooks on DFQF: Distribution and Training

305. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and related economic shocks, UNCTAD and the EIF Executive Secretariat aim to assist the LDCs with their economic recovery efforts by taking advantage of the multilateral trade opportunities arising from the initiative of the Sixth Ministerial Conference of WTO, held in Hong Kong, China, on duty-free and quota-free market access. Some LDCs, particularly African countries, have not yet fully exploited the opportunities offered by these unilateral preferences.

306. Hence, in 2020, UNCTAD distributed the handbooks on DFQF: “Handbooks on Duty and Quota Free Market Access and Rules of Origin for Least Developed Countries” to the LDCs. This UNCTAD handbook is intended to help LDCs take advantage of the multilateral trade opportunities arising from the Sixth Ministerial Conference of WTO initiative on duty-free and quota-free market access. This initiative's philosophy is that WTO member States grant duty-free and quota-free access to their markets for products originating from the LDCs to increase their exports, promote their industrialization and their socio-economic development.

307. This document consists of two volumes. The first volume presents the process of duty-free and quota-free market access from the WTO Ministerial Conference in Singapore in 1996 to that of Buenos Aires in 2017. It also highlights Bali (2013) and Nairobi (2015)

decisions on preferential rules of origin; those of Canada, Japan, the United States and the European Union. The second volume, linked to the first, presents a lucid assessment of the decisions taken in Hong Kong (China) on the implementation of these trade preferences by developing countries. It analyses the DFQF access regimes granted by non-quadrilateral countries, especially the trade preferences granted by developing countries in the context of strengthening South-South cooperation.

308. In addition to the distribution of the handbooks on DFQF, a series of webinars will be organized in 2021 on how to make use of DFQF based on UNCTAD Handbook on Duty-Free and Quota-Free Market Access and Rules of Origin for Least Developed Countries. Each webinar consists of 2 sessions of around 1 hour and 30 minutes each. During the first session, the requirements that exporters need to fulfil in order to benefit from the duty-free and quota-free initiative as well as the use of the UNCTAD Database on GSP Utilization are covered. The second session reviews the exercises conducted by participants and presents other relevant online resources with hands-on examples. The target audience consists of representatives of private sector association, exporter associations, trade promotion agencies, major exporters and government officials dealing with trade policy formulation and implementation of trade agreement. The first webinars have started in March 2021.

309. The other contribution of UNCTAD was the publications below:

- (a) Getting to better rules of origin for LDCs;
- (b) Cambodia Diagnostic Trade Integration Study 2019–2023: UNCTAD Contribution to chapter 1: Trade Policy and Regional Integration (RCEP, BRI, CP-TPP, FTAs).

310. **Results.** UNCTAD technical assistance for market access and rules of origin contributed to help LDCs to better understand market access rules and mechanisms. The research and capacity-building activities carried out under this programme enhanced the skills and knowledge of officials from LDCs on specific operationally important areas of international economic law and policy. The analytical and training activities provided the participants with a deeper understanding of alternative approaches and the implications of different trade policy rules and regulations and enhanced their capacity to apply this knowledge in the course of international negotiations and the implementation of the WTO LDC Package resulting from the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Declaration.

B6 Breaking the chains of commodity dependence

Table B6
Breaking the chains of commodity dependence

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/9AX	Global Commodities Forum	2009–	Multi-donors
INT/OT/HAN	Integrating landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries into regional and global value chains	2018–	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
INT/OT/IBE	Addressing vulnerabilities of commodity dependent developing countries (CDDCS)	2020–	Common Fund for Commodities
ROA-1617 (K10)	Promoting cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa	2016–	Development Account

311. **Development context.** The economic consequences of commodity dependence are severe. The volatility of commodity prices hits countries' macroeconomic stability. The lack of value-added activities hampers economic diversification and industrial

development. To ensure that commodities positively contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is therefore critical to break the chains of commodity dependence. In this regard, diversification and value addition are essential for commodity-dependent developing countries to reduce their economic vulnerability to commodity price fluctuation, while contributing to better jobs and livelihoods for their citizens. UNCTAD assists countries in this direction through its various projects on breaking the chains of commodity dependence.

312. **Objectives.** In response to a request for assistance, UNCTAD works with a country to evaluate its needs towards realizing the following four main thematic outcomes:

- (a) Developing value added activities in its commodity sector;
- (b) Establishing development linkages between the commodity sector and the wider economy;
- (c) Diversifying to non-commodity activities;
- (d) Integrating into global and regional value chains.

313. Breaking the chains of commodity dependence develops the capacity of policymakers and stakeholders in project countries to assess the economic viability of investments and commercial initiatives that contribute to the programme's four thematic outcomes, as well as to formulate evidence-based policies in support of their development. For instance, the project on "Integrating landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries into regional and global value chains" focuses on promoting the agri-food industry by supporting the efforts of local stakeholders in accessing new international markets in the four project countries (Ethiopia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Uzbekistan).

314. **Outputs.** In 2020, under the project on "Integrating landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries into regional and global value chains", and in consultation with stakeholders, notably the national authorities through the designated focal points both in the capital and in Geneva, UNCTAD continued rolling out the implementation of project activities in the four countries. During the period, the technical report *Analysing the Maize Value Chain for Export in the Lao People's Democratic Republic* was published in September 2020. The policy findings of the study were discussed in a national workshop that took place in hybrid form in October 2020 in Vientiane, with a group of senior government officials from both national and subnational relevant institutions (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry and Commerce) and development partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and others. Additionally, field surveys in both Mongolia and Uzbekistan were implemented by teams of national consultants working with UNCTAD experts. In Uzbekistan, the field survey included 103 farmers across five fruit-producing regions, as well as a number of buyers of fruit including consolidators and processors/exporters, while in Mongolia the field survey included 168 herders from eight aimags, as well as a number of other relevant stakeholders (such as meat exporters). During the period, UNCTAD conducted research work using data gathered from field surveys, as well as other relevant qualitative and quantitative information, to produce studies that were presented and discussed with the different national authorities during national workshops that took place in Ethiopia, Mongolia and Uzbekistan during the first quarter of 2021.

315. Under the project "Addressing vulnerabilities of commodity dependent developing countries", funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), a paper reviewing the global debate and experience on commodities and development over the past decades was commissioned. The paper analyses the current global development context and identifies new and emerging challenges and opportunities faced by Commodity Dependent Developing Countries (CDDCs). It further explores how such countries can engage in both public and private sectors and civil society to rebalance global value chains in commodity markets. The role of international organizations, such as the CFC itself and International Commodity Bodies, can play in assisting CDDCs to reduce vulnerabilities, and shake off their dependence on commodities is also investigated. Policy interventions and country experiences that have successfully promoted south-south collaboration for sustainable

development in CDDCs are reviewed. The paper is expected to be finalized in the second half of 2021.

316. The project “Improving the value added of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa” received an extension to the end of December 2020. However, due to travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNCTAD had to cancel the two additional study visits planned under the extension. During the period the project hired a set of external evaluators to evaluate project implementation.

317. From the expertise built during the Development Account project on cotton by-products, UNCTAD formed a joint initiative with the WTO and ITC on the same subject, to carry forward the work and respond to requests from member States for additional technical assistance in this area. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) funded the initiative’s first phase of work, to conduct feasibility studies with the overall goal of identifying opportunities to increase revenues from cotton, in particular for smallholder and women farmers, by developing and adding value to cotton by-products. WTO implemented the projects to prepare feasibility studies in eight least-developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Implementation of the studies was completed at the end of 2020. In 2021, EIF funded the preparation of feasibility studies for two additional LDCs, namely Malawi and Togo. UNCTAD became the main implementing entity to conduct these feasibility studies. As of February 2021, the projects were in the start-up phase, with UNCTAD in the process of identifying and hiring consultants for each country.

318. **Results.** By its original end date of 31 December 2019, the project on cotton by-products realized all of its indicators of achievement. For example: three countries (Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) validated national action plans to develop cotton by-products, with accompanying evidence-based policies; investment profiles for priority by-products were prepared and delivered to the investment promotion agencies in the same three countries. Most importantly for the sustainability of the project activities, the project countries formulated a total of six project and investment plans for onward research and commercial projects. Of these, an entrepreneur in Zambia used the lessons and contacts acquired through the project to modernize the machinery at his absorbent cotton plan, leading to increased production, revenues and employment.³³ Beyond the project activities and end date, UNCTAD supported this entrepreneur in drafting his investment plans and fundraising requests.

319. For the project “Integrating landlocked commodity-dependent developing countries into regional and global value chains”, the country-level activities in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic had been completed by the end of 2020. The publication of the data-based technical report on the maize value chain and the implementation of the national workshop in Vientiane in 2020, together with the targeted capacity-building conducted in 2019, have improved statistical and analytical capacity of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in effective policy formulation to promote its integration into regional and global value chains and enhance development linkages. UNCTAD co-organized the national workshop in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic with the Department of Trade Promotion of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and had the close support of and coordination with the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) in the country. The latter is working closely with the authorities and providing support to the ongoing revision of the different national development and sectorial plans (e.g., Agricultural and 5-Year Plans in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic). The findings of UNCTAD research and policy discussions are to be incorporated in the discussion of the policy action plans of the authorities through the work carried out by the United Nations RCO, which is coordinating development work of the whole United Nations system in the country.

³³ Success story available at <https://unctad.org/news/zambian-cotton-entrepreneur-goes-beyond-fibre>.

B9 Sustainable and resilient transport and logistics services

Table B9
Sustainable and resilient transport and logistics services

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
INT/9X/31Y	Introduction of multimodal transport and microcomputer software programmes	1993–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/IAP	Climate resilient transport infrastructure for sustainable trade, tourism and development in SDS	2019–	Germany
RAF/0T/HAC	Regional Study for “Commercialization of the Trans-Saharan Road Corridor”	2020–	Islamic development bank
ROA-2023 (X12)	Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics	2020–	Development Account

320. **Development context.** UNCTAD continued to implement various technical assistance activities in the field of transport and logistics. Areas of focus included maritime transport; transport and transit corridors; as well as cross cutting issues such as sustainability, finance, and public–private partnerships (PPPs).

321. This work was closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and built heavily on the synergies and gains derived from enhanced collaboration and partnerships with varied partners. This includes United Nations entities, such as UNDESA, UNECA, UNESCAP, UNESCWA, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). UNCTAD work also supported the energy transition in maritime transport, where the decarbonization of shipping poses historical challenges but also opportunities for developing countries.

322. Transport and trade logistics are important transmission channels that contribute to the challenges as well as the recovery of interdependent economies. Disruptions to transport networks send shock waves through the extended supply chains as evidenced by the many disruptions recorded over time and resulting from external shocks ranging from security breaches to climate and natural disasters as well as pandemics as recently shown by COVID-19. The crisis has highlighted the importance of transport, including maritime transport, for the continuity, reliability and the well-functioning of global supply chains.

323. The nexus between the 2030 Agenda, the Goals, the Paris Agreement and sustainable freight transport is strong. Freight transport is linked to wide-ranging aspects of modern societies and economic structures. It adds value to the economy and generates social gains, including by supporting trade, linking supply chains, enhancing connectivity, allowing for market access, generating employment and enabling business opportunities.

324. **Objectives and features.** In 2020, UNCTAD collaborated with the five United Nations regional commissions to help developing countries tackle the trade and transport challenges that resulted from the coronavirus pandemic. Such collaboration took the form of a joint rapid response United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on “Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics: Contactless, seamless and collaborative United Nations solutions”.

325. UNCTAD also collaborated with IMO in a project to review the assessment of impacts on states of concrete decarbonization measures that are being negotiated at the IMO. Often, the same developing countries, including SIDS and LDCs, that are most negatively impacted by climate change are also potentially most negatively affected by

higher transport costs and lower connectivity that may result from some decarbonization measures.

326. As part of its work on transport and transit corridors, UNCTAD in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), has been supporting the promotion and the commercialization of the Trans-Saharan Road Corridor (TSR), which comprises six countries, namely Algeria, Chad, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Tunisia. UNCTAD's technical assistance intervention considers ways in which the TSR road network could transform and evolve to become a successful regional economic corridor and its functions extend beyond ensuring transport and transit.

327. As part of the transport and logistics related activities under European Union-funded project in Angola, UNCTAD is assisting the Government in their efforts to improve the transport infrastructure and services through public-private partnerships (PPPs), which are being encouraged by the Angolan Government in line with the country's strategic plan and objectives. PPPs are expected to play an important role in attracting investments to achieve a new level of economic and social development and improve access to quality infrastructure and services, with the efficient use of public and private funds.

328. **Outputs.** Under the maritime supply chain component of the UNDA project on Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics, UNCTAD carried out an assessment of the pandemic's impact on the maritime transport sector and trade with the main findings of this work being published in dedicated report entitled "COVID-19 and maritime transport: Impact and responses". This assessment identified the immediate impacts of the pandemic on maritime trade flows, ship calls, and liner shipping connectivity in the first half of 2020, for all regions, and provided some of the key responses and adjustments made at the port level as well as by other stakeholders across the maritime supply chain to cope with the disruption and maintain business continuity.³⁴ The main findings and insights gained from this assessment (which have been also updated to cover full year 2020) are disseminated by delivering tailored regional webinars (for Latin American and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa) in collaboration with United Nations regional commissions.

329. Under the collaboration with the IMO, UNCTAD produced a comprehensive review report of the initial impact assessments of decarbonization measures. The report was submitted to the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee and helped inform decisions about future decarbonization measures in shipping.

330. Under the Trans-Saharan Road Corridor (TSR) project, UNCTAD carried a substantive analytical assessment of the corridor, highlighting its performances, challenges and obstacles undermining its operations, as well as potential solutions. In its study, UNCTAD has put forward recommendations with a view to establishing a suitable TSR corridor management mechanism as key instrument to promote and commercialize the TSR corridor. The study recommends that (a) a framework for cooperation between the TSR corridor member countries be established; and that (a) an appropriate regional management mechanism or structure for the TSR corridor to support effective coordination, operation, management, promotion and commercialization of the corridor be put in place. In addition, in its recommendations, the study identified the key elements necessary for an intergovernmental agreement (memorandum of understanding) and proposed that a regional TSR economic corridor programme or project be developed to help operationalize the various recommendations.³⁵ In December 2020, UNCTAD in close collaboration with the IsDB and the Trans-Saharan Road Liaison Committee (TRLIC) organized a webinar which brought together over 40 participants from TRLIC member countries, in addition to experts from other international and regional institutions, to discuss findings of the study. The discussions confirmed the relevance and importance of a TSR economic corridor.

331. Continuing its work under Angola project, UNCTAD made significant progress and provided capacity-building and training activities to support the development and

³⁴ For further information about the UNDA project, see <https://unttc.org/>.

³⁵ For further information, see <https://unctad.org/project/commercialization-trans-saharan-road-corridor-through-development-regional-corridor>.

implementation of PPPs programme including in transport and logistics, despite the COVID-19 context. Several capacity-building, training and advisory activities (online activities) have been conducted to (a) build the knowledge and understanding of government officials on the PPPs with an emphasis on infrastructure and transportation services; and (b) improve knowledge on the preparation of PPP projects. As an innovative approach to achieve project objectives and better address the requests from the Government of Angola in the context of COVID-19, UNCTAD maintained regular online meetings with key stakeholders and conducted all training through a series of webinars.

332. In addition, UNCTAD continued to provide advice and policy guidance in response to internal and external requests received from various entities, including on the legal framework on international shipping and maritime law, particularly competition law issues and the UNCTAD Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences; issues related to ship-source pollution and related environmental challenges; sustainable transport and the implications of climate change for maritime transport, including in particular the potential impacts of climate variability and change on seaports and associated adaptation requirements.

333. **Results and impacts.** UNCTAD collaboration with the IMO has helped its members take decisions on future measures that aim at the decarbonization of maritime transport. International shipping and ports will in coming years and decades undergo a comprehensive energy transition. UNCTAD assessment of impacts on States as well as related technical assistance to developing countries has been an important step towards achieving climate change mitigation while at the same time also mitigating the potential impacts of decarbonization measures on States.

334. Under the Trans-Saharan Road Corridor (TSR) project, there was a consensus at the meeting that the time was ripe for the TSR network to step into its full potential and act as a catalyst for regional integration, trade expansion, economic growth, and social progress. UNCTAD as well as other development and institutional partners (as deemed appropriate) will continue to support the TSR Corridor Economic Development initiative. In this regard, the TRLC will organize a high-level meeting to discuss future activities to advance UNCTAD recommendations towards the main objective of promoting and commercializing the TSR corridor.

335. In Angola, since the implementation of the project activities on PPPs in 2018, UNCTAD has become a key knowledge and advisor partner to the Government of Angola and has been playing an active role in providing constant technical support to the Government in their effort to develop and implement PPPs programme. UNCTAD has also been collaborating with other organizations such as Sustainable Infrastructure Foundation (SIF) that coordinates the provision of a multilateral platform for sustainable infrastructure (known as SOURCE) to support Angola in developing and implementing PPPs projects.

B99 Other

Table B99

Other

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
<i>Division on Globalization and Development Strategies</i>			
PAL/0T/GAA	Assessment of the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people	2020–	Saudi Arabia
ROA-2023 (Z12)	Response and Recovery: Mobilising financial resources for development in the time of Covid-19	2020–	Development Account

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
<i>Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes</i>			
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD joint programme, Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
INT/9X/77J	Trust Fund for Least Developed Countries: Core project	1997–	Multi-donor
ROA-1617 (M10)	Indices for benchmarking productive capacities for evidence-based policymaking in landlocked developing countries	2016–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (E12)	Coherent strategies for productive capacity development in African Least Developed Countries	2020–	Development Account

1. Assistance to the Palestinian people

336. **Development context.** In 2020, socioeconomic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have moved from bad to worse. High rates of poverty and unemployment persisted and GDP per capita declined for the third consecutive year. Even before the COVID-19 economic shock the economy was expected to slip into recession in 2020 and 2021.

337. The Palestinian economy failed to regain momentum in 2019, registering just 0.9 per cent of real GDP growth, not much better than the two preceding years. The slowdown was driven by decline in private and public consumption and investment. Down from 2.3 per cent in 2018, growth in the West Bank was 1.15 per cent, its lowest since 2012. Meanwhile in Gaza GDP growth was virtually zero and the Strip has thus failed to rebound from two consecutive contractions: -7.7 per cent in 2017 and -3.5 per cent in 2018. Therefore, real GDP per capita declined by 1.6 per cent in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the third year in a row where it fell by 1.1 per cent in the West Bank and 2.8 per cent in Gaza.

338. In 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, performance of the Palestinian economy was dismal, and the overall environment has been unfavourable. The productive base was hollowed out by recurrent hostilities, geographical and economic fragmentation, technological regression, restrictions on imported inputs and technology, loss of land and natural resources, settlement expansion and leakage of fiscal resources and the collapse of the economy of Gaza. The COVID-19 pandemic made a difficult situation worse.

339. The fiscal situation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) took a sharp negative turn in 2019 and 2020 as a result of a dispute with the occupying power over the transfer of Palestinian clearance revenue to the PNA, which accounts for two-third of its total revenues. The fiscal crisis weighed heavily on economic growth and worsened the revenue loss.

340. The prolonged closure of Gaza and severe restrictions virtually eliminated its export sector. Gaza's exports have plunged below a quarter of their 2007 levels, before the imposition of the blockade. The sector is additionally constrained by lack of access to inputs, technology, power shortages and by pervasive uncertainty. The World Bank estimates that without the Israeli restrictions, Palestinian exports could be twice their current levels, given the proximity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory to large regional markets.

341. The barriers to movement of Palestinian workers have had significant economic and human implications. These barriers divide the West Bank into disconnected islands controlled by over 600 military checkpoints, gates, and roads for Israeli settlers. The only contiguous part of the West Bank is Area C, but it remains under Israeli control and is

inaccessible to Palestinian producers even though it has the most valuable natural resources such as fertile land, stone, minerals, cosmetics, and tourist attractions. Meanwhile, the Separation Barrier, along with settlements, deepen the physical, administrative, and legal fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory into 227 disconnected islands lacking integrative infrastructure.

342. The prolonged occupation and conflict left the Palestinian economy vulnerable to shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic struck at a time of rapidly deteriorating conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with the first case reported in early March 2020. The PNA responded by closing institutions and limiting the movement of people within the Occupied Palestinian Territory and completely locking down some localities.

343. The historical record suggests that the cost of the pandemic will be significant. Following the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the occupying power imposed a policy of border and internal closures that resulted in widespread disruption of economic activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The restriction reversed a cycle of double-digit growth in previous years as real GDP contracted by 9, 9 and 13 per cent in 2000, 2001 and 2002, respectively. The consecutive three-year contraction translated into the decline of real GDP per capita by 11 per cent in 2000, 12 per cent in 2001 and 15 per cent in 2002.

344. Latest data on the performance of the Palestinian Economy during 2020 indicate dismal conditions. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the COVID-19 pandemic and the clearance revenue crisis combined to push the economy into a sharp 12 per cent contraction in 2020. As a result, GDP per capita declined, unemployment skyrocketed, and additional households joined the poverty-stricken segments of the population. Prospects for 2021 are grim.

345. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD programme on assistance to the Palestinian people continues to directly respond to paragraph 55 (dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, which requests UNCTAD to “continue to assess the economic development prospects of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and examine obstacles to trade and development, as part of the international community’s commitment to building an independent Palestinian State, and with a view to alleviating the adverse economic and social conditions imposed on the Palestinian people”.

346. This programme is also guided by paragraph 31 (m) of the Doha Mandate, paragraph 44 of the Accra Accord and paragraph 35 of the Sao Paulo Consensus. The programme aims to build and strengthen the institutional capacities of the Palestinian public and the private sectors required for building a robust economy to underpin a future independent Palestinian State.

347. The United Nations General Assembly, through seven resolutions – resolutions 69/20, 70/12, 71/20, 72/13, 73/18, 74/10 and 75/20 – requests that UNCTAD should report to the General Assembly on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

348. In 2020, UNCTAD has been supporting the Palestinian people to build and strengthen the institutional capacities of the public and private sectors. UNCTAD support addresses the constraints and emerging needs of the economy through four clusters:

- (a) Trade and macroeconomic policies and development strategies;
- (b) Trade facilitation and logistics;
- (c) Finance and development;
- (d) Enterprise, investment, and competition policy.

349. **Outputs and results.** In 2020, UNCTAD continued its support to the Palestinian people in coordination with Palestinian National Authority, Palestinian civil society, international organizations, donors and the United Nations country team; with the goal of rehabilitating its economy and pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals. The programme continued to strengthen its ongoing support for the Palestinian people despite difficult field conditions.

350. To this end, in 2020, UNCTAD continued to provide advisory services to the Forecasting Unit of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), which uses UNCTAD macro-econometric model of the Palestinian economy and is run by professional staff trained by UNCTAD. PCBS forecasts are used by the Ministry of Finance for budget preparations and by other Palestinian agencies for forecasting and scenario analysis. Most recently, the model was used by the PCBS to estimate the economic and fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

351. Furthermore, in April and May 2020, UNCTAD provided Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute-MAS with a series of advisory services on modelling and assessing the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

352. In response to the seven above-mentioned General Assembly resolutions (see para. 347), in 2020, UNCTAD submitted a report (A/75/310) to the General Assembly on the economic cost of occupation, focusing on the economic impact of the closure and restrictions on the Gaza Strip. The report estimates the additional poverty caused by these measures in terms of: (a) the rate and gap of poverty at the household level, (b) the minimum cost of eliminating poverty and (c) the potential economic growth that could have been realized if the closure and the military operations had not occurred.

353. In 2020, UNCTAD released a study (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2020/1) titled “The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Impoverishment of Gaza under Blockade”. The main objective of this study is to shed light on the critical situation in Gaza and estimate the costs of the closure and restrictions and military operations for the Palestinian people in Gaza, with a particular focus on the socioeconomic conditions at the household level, in addition to giving indicators for the range of the economic growth that could have been realized had the closure and restrictions and recurrent hostilities not occurred - that is, their economic costs in terms of lost GDP.

354. In late 2020, UNCTAD received a grant from the Government of Saudi Arabia to sustain UNCTAD professional capacity required for supporting the Palestinian people’s efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the occupied Palestinian territory. The grant funds a project that will provide systematic, evidence-based assessments of the economic cost of the occupation for the Palestinian people. The goal of the project is to facilitate future negotiations towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Middle East.

355. In 2020, UNCTAD continued to enhance and update its macro-econometric model of the Palestinian economy. The updated framework factors in recent structural changes in the economy and explores alternative methodologies and techniques. Upon completion of the updates, the model will be shared fully with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute-MAS as was the case with the first model developed by UNCTAD. This will enable the PCBS and MAS to forecast the prospects of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory, and to provide Palestinian policy makers and the private sector with practical tools to evaluate key aspects of the Palestinian economy, assess alternative policy options/scenarios, and assist in formulating economic development strategies to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Productive capacity-building in vulnerable economies

2.1. *Finding opportunities for niche commodities from developing countries in health food markets*

356. **Development context.** For several decades structurally weak and vulnerable economies such as landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) have not been able to take full advantage of global trade opportunities and improved market access conditions. This is partly due to their weak productive and supply capacities, and partly due to their weak trade policy formulation and implementation capacities. Beyond domestic constraints, market entry barriers such as non-tariff measures remain hindrances to enhancing their export opportunities. This is despite the fact that they enjoy preferential market access for their exports to major developed country markets particularly in the European Union.

Furthermore, geographical challenges such as remoteness from regional and international markets, high cost of transportation and lack of transit-transport systems are detrimental to export competitiveness and development of LLDCs. In some cases, beyond the domestic challenges, regional integration processes have also created complex rules of origin especially in Africa, resulting in trade loss and high transactions costs. Furthermore, many LLDCs remain dependent on primary commodities for most of their export revenue, rendering them highly vulnerable to external shocks. Their persistent underdevelopment and in many cases, long term decline, illustrates how trade could not uplift these countries' socioeconomic conditions. This also indicates the complexity and interrelated nature of the challenges, which undermine the potential and national policy efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

357. The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has further exacerbated these development obstacles. The lack of productive capacities in LLDCs undermined their ability to respond to the coronavirus disease both in terms of the health response and in terms of building socio-economic resilience. Furthermore, their vulnerability to external shocks amplified the impact of the fall in commodity prices. In this way, the coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the need to diversify the economy and build productive capacities. This project aims to support these goals by exploring the potential of new products.

358. There is significant potential for horizontal diversification in many of these countries in producing and exporting new and dynamic products, such as health-enhancing foods. In 2020, it was further decided to enlarge the scope of this project to include bioprospecting, i.e. the exploration of biodiversity for commercially valuable genetic and biochemical resources. If fully exploited, such a potential could help LLDCs to maximize the benefits from international trade, build export competitiveness and join the group of successful exporters.

359. Against this background, this project will help: (a) to identify export potential and competitiveness of a number of structurally weak and vulnerable economies in health-enhancing specialty foods; (b) to map the new and dynamic products as well as export potential with market opportunities, primarily in the European Union; and (c) to build regulatory and institutional capacities of the selected countries to monitor and certify conformity with specialty food standards.

360. **Objectives.** The project aims to build the capacities of selected landlocked developing countries to foster productive capacities and diversify their exports by identifying and harnessing the export potential of health food commodities and nutraceuticals, as well as of bioprospecting. The project will draw on global and national studies of the potential of selected LLDCs in developing the health food or nutraceutical sector, as well as bioprospecting, and potential export markets. In addition, the project aims to identify the principal obstacles to the development and expansion of exports in these sectors and propose policies and measures to address them. In this way, the project will assist policymakers from selected LLDCs in designing and implementing policies to build productive capacities, expand and diversify their exports, and achieve structural transformation.

361. **Outputs and results.** In 2020, UNCTAD worked to complement a first global study on "Potential and Constraints for Developing Countries' Exports of Health Foods and Nutraceuticals: Azerbaijan, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Nepal" by commissioning additional studies in the field of nutraceuticals and the newly added area of bioprospecting, including mapping export markets and requirements. UNCTAD launched five new studies to explore the potential of nutraceuticals, bioprospecting, and the blue economy to support export diversification and inclusive development in vulnerable economies. A first study will assess potential export markets, market access and market entry conditions or requirements for nutraceuticals and biogenetic products from countries such as Bhutan, Ethiopia, Mauritius and Nepal as suppliers of health-enhancing foods or individual ingredients. A second study will assess the experience of several developing countries in sustainably harnessing their biodiversity resources for socioeconomic development, including "benefit sharing" with communities, owners and holders of the resources, and examine the policy and institutional frameworks that have assisted the successful countries in the preservation and sustainable use of

biodiversity and biogenetic materials, as well as how binding constraints are unlocked and what incentives have been provided by the Governments of in support of the development of biogenetic and biodiversity products. UNCTAD furthermore launched a study specifically examining the challenges and opportunities for bioprospecting in Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

362. UNCTAD also broadened the scope of its research to enable LLDCs to draw on the experiences of other countries in harnessing their biodiversity resources for development. In particular, UNCTAD launched a study on bioprospecting in Vietnam, and a study examining the state of the Blue Economy in African SIDS, as well as the binding (supply and demand side) constraints facing its development. It will analyse key components and aspects of the Blue Economy, including some of the relevant economic sectors, such as fisheries, tourism, bio-prospecting, renewable energy, as well as the environmental management requirements to ensure the sustainability of the blue economy.

363. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plans to hold a regional workshop in 2020 to disseminate the initial findings and provide for an exchange of views among LLDCs on the potential of the health food sector and the measures needed to harness, were postponed. UNCTAD aims to publish a study on the development potential of nutraceuticals in 2021, and to organize related technical cooperation and capacity-building workshops as soon as the health-situation permits.

2.2. *Indices for benchmarking productive capacities for evidence-based policymaking in landlocked developing countries*

364. **Development context.** The key lesson from the research and policy analysis work of UNCTAD is that placing the development of productive capacities at the heart of trade and development policies is essential for LLDCs to address their underdevelopment and to put them on the path of sustainable development. This calls for measuring and benchmarking productive capacities in LLDCs through a careful identification of indicators. Therefore, the ultimate outcome of this project will be a productive capacities index (PCI)³⁶ constructed and validated for three beneficiary countries. In each beneficiary country, government officials responsible for statistical and development analysis will be trained in monitoring the PCIs, and in their use for generating and implementing development strategies. The project is financed through the tenth Tranche of Development Account and complemented with other project funds (i.e. a project funded by Common Fund for Commodities on commodity value chains).

365. By assisting LLDCs to monitor their progress in building productive capacities, the PCI can assist them in achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 1 (poverty eradication), Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 3 (good health and wellbeing), Goal 4 (quality education), Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 10 (reduced inequality), Goal 16 (peace and justice – strong institutions) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

366. **Objectives and features.** The main objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of selected landlocked developing countries to develop Productive Capacities Indices and use them to support evidence-based policymaking. With this objective in mind, the project assists in defining the conceptual, methodological and statistical framework for identifying, selecting and validating indicators, which will be used in the construction of the Productive Capacity Index.

367. **Outputs.** In 2020, activities on this project focused on finalizing the methodology for the PCI, as well as preparing all relevant materials for its planned launch in early 2021. This included consultations with the Development Statistics and Information Branch of UNCTAD as well as academic experts. The PCI uses data from 193 countries, collected

³⁶ The Productive Capacities Index is a composite index to measure the state (condition) of productive capacities in economies on the basis of a set of sub-indices, covering areas such as structural economic transformation, transport, ICT, innovation and technology, employment and labour productivity, energy and private sector development, and so forth.

between 2000 and 2018, and 46 indicators, to measure performance across eight components of productive capacities – natural capital, human capital, energy, institutions, structural change, information and communications technologies (ICT), transport and the private sector. The index scores a country’s performance on productive capacities on a scale of 1 to 100, assessing the effectiveness of policies and strategies as well as existing gaps and limitations. It can help Governments formulate and implement their policies better and benchmark their achievements.

368. In addition, UNCTAD finalized and released two publications on the PCI, one outlining the finalized methodology, and one analysing the performance of LLDCs in building productive capacities, in comparison to other country groups. The study finds that LLDCs underperform other developing countries in all categories of the PCI except for natural capital.

369. Furthermore, UNCTAD prepared a series of materials to prepare the official launch of the PCI in early 2021, including press releases, infographics and a dedicated website where the PCI has been made publicly available.

370. **Results.** It is expected that the newly launched PCI will enable policymakers and practitioners as well as academics in LLDCs and other developing countries to improve evidence-based policymaking based on the analytical insights offered by the PCI.

2.3. *Coherent strategies for productive capacity development in selected African Least Developed Countries*

371. **Development context.** UNCTAD is implementing a United Nations Development Account project called “Coherent strategies for productive capacity development in selected African least developed countries”. The project beneficiaries are Burkina Faso, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The implementation of the activities of the project began in the first quarter of 2020 and will end in the last quarter of 2023. The three beneficiary countries have a strong commitment to fostering sustained growth, creating decent jobs, and building resilience to shocks through developing productive capacities and transforming the structure of their economies from low- to high-productivity activities. While some progress has been made over the past few decades, manufacturing continues to play a relatively small role in these economies both in terms of its share of output and its contribution to exports.

372. Although the Governments of the beneficiary countries understand the importance of productive capacities and the crucial role of trade and industrial policies in fostering them, there is an urgent need for an operational strategy on how to build such capacities in African LDCs. Existing strategic frameworks to develop productive capacities tend to be fragmented, ad hoc and hard to operationalize at the country level. In addition, they tend to focus more on building new capacities and less on how to maintain and make better use of existing capacities. In this context, there is a dire need for a more holistic and coherent approach to productive capacity development that strikes a good balance between the need to build and utilize existing capacities. The proposed project seeks to strengthen the capacities of beneficiary countries to formulate and implement such holistic and coherent strategies to develop and utilize productive capacities to enhance their prospects of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, the project is expected to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) and Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation).

373. **Objectives.** The main objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of beneficiary countries to build, utilize and maintain productive capacities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

374. **Outputs.** In the light of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of the project in 2020 was on the preparation of national studies identifying the core constraints to the development of productive capacities in Burkina Faso, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, and the identification of policy recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve national goals on productive transformation. In addition to

these studies, two papers were prepared on the role of trade and industrial policies in promoting productive transformation in Burkina Faso and Rwanda and actions that have to be taken to make trade and industrial policies more supportive of productive transformation. The country-studies will serve as background papers for the training and skill building activities that will be organized in the three beneficiary countries in 2021 and 2022.

375. **Results and impact.** The implementation of the project began during the onset of the lockdowns and travel restrictions were imposed by national authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this constraint, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the project as evidenced by the number of activities that have already been carried out.

376. At the request of the Government of Rwanda, a Policy Implementation Adviser was hired to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) during the revision of the National Trade and Industrial Development Strategies in 2020. An outcome of this assignment was the preparation of a strategic paper on how to enhance coherence to strengthen Rwanda's productive capacities. The Adviser presented the findings of this document, on 21 August 2020, to the MINICOM Senior Management Team chaired by the Minister and to a workshop for all MINICOM Directors-General and consultants working on the revised trade and industrial policies and related strategic documents.

377. Another impact of the project is the sensitization of policy-researchers in Rwanda on the need for more focus and attention on productive capacity development issues. Through bilateral discussions and a keynote presentation on productive capacities at the sixth Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN) Conference, held in Kigali on 25 February 2020, UNCTAD has been able to convince the EPRN Secretariat to make "Economic Policy Measures to Enhance Productive Capacities post COVID-19 Crisis" the theme of its 7th Annual Research Conference to be held in 2021. This will provide a very good platform for exchange of knowledge on productive capacities between researchers and policymakers.

2.4. *Supporting development efforts of Angola through European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II*

378. **Development context.** In 2019, Angola had a population of approximately 31.8 million people and a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 84 603 millions (current prices). While the GDP is relatively high compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, excluding Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, it remains highly volatile. The GDP growth rate for 2019 was negative at -1.6 per cent.³⁷ Buoyed by high petroleum prices, Angola experienced a period of accelerated growth in its GDP, with the highest annual average growth rates in 2002 (14.53 per cent), 2005 (15.03 per cent) and 2007 (14.01 per cent).³⁸ The 2008–2009 global economic crisis reversed the high growth rate, which dropped to 0.86 per cent in 2009 and after a period of renewed growth from 2010 onwards reached negative levels in 2016 (-2.58). The slowing growth of Angola until 2019 was the result of instabilities and fluctuations in already low global commodity prices. Indeed, the country continues to depend on oil that constitutes 93 per cent of its exports,³⁹ although this dependency is declining compared to 97 per cent in 2017.⁴⁰ Further, in terms of human development, Angola ranks 148 among 189 countries and is categorized in the lower end of medium human development.⁴¹ The Productive Capacities Index (PCI) recently published ranks Angola 177 on a list of 193 economies with a PCI of 22.03. While the PCI is relatively high for one component of the productive capacities – natural capital, it is lower than the LDC average for human capital, institutions and private sector in particular.⁴² Despite recent efforts, key gaps and bottlenecks in the investment climate persist, including

³⁷ UNCTADstat database; data published in 2020.

³⁸ Growth rates are based on GDP in constant 2010 United States dollars.

³⁹ UNCTADstat database 2019.

⁴⁰ UNCTADstat database 2017.

⁴¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2020*.

⁴² UNCTAD, *Productive Capacities Index: Methodological Approach and Results* (Geneva, 2020).

a complex system for FDI entry and establishment, burdensome operational regulations, persistence of restrictive business practices and a lack of institutional capacity and coordination.⁴³

379. Furthermore, the COVID-19 related health and economic crisis that erupted in 2020 is estimated to have had a high toll on LDCs, including Angola. The slight signs of recovery from COVID-related shocks are slow and uncertain, and 2020 was the fifth year in a row of recession and “hardship” for the country.⁴⁴ Angola remains heavily dependent on oil, which accounts for a whopping 93 per cent of the nation’s total merchandise exports (2019). This dependency makes it – along with most LDCs dependent on the export of a few products – highly vulnerable to foreign trade shocks. Consequently, the sharp fall in the volume and prices of fuel during the pandemic impacted the country severely. Sub-Saharan Africa stands to be the hardest hit region in terms of increase in extreme poverty due to the pandemic.⁴⁵ Even more than before, the situation calls for urgent need for export diversification outside of the extractive sectors, which remains high on the trade and development agenda of Angola.

380. **Objectives and features.** The European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II – a programme running over the period 2017–2023 – was designed to respond to the above challenges, and it is therefore more topical than ever. The programme aims to support Angola in its efforts towards structural transformation, identification of potential non-oil export products and diversification of the economy as well as integration into the regional and global economy. It provides training, capacity-building and advisory activities, as well as knowledge sharing and study tour opportunities for Angolan stakeholders. Train for Trade II aims to improve the capacity of Angola in policy formulation and implementation, which is expected to directly contribute to economic growth, diversification of the economy, job creation, poverty reduction, and improved living conditions for the population. It also aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and young people. In collaboration with the national coordinating entity - Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MINDCOM), the Train for Trade II Programme works with various ministries, agencies, private sector entities and non-governmental organizations at the national level. The Train for Trade II Programme consists of seven components, including (a) commercial diplomacy; (b) creative economy; (c) Empretec entrepreneurship training and entrepreneurship policy development; (d) National Green Export Review; (e) Investment Policy Review; (f) trade facilitation; and (g) transport and logistics. The programme is part of the overall Trade Support Project financed by the European Union, with a total budget of €12 million.

381. **Outputs.** The programme underwent a Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise commissioned by the European Union in March 2020. As a result of its recommendations, the programme’s logical framework was revised in the second half of 2020 to better capture the innovative results being achieved through the programme. Further, new complementary activities across the different components were designed to address some needs that have emerged during the programme implementation. To deliver these new activities, the European Union committed an additional funding of €780,000, bringing the total programme budget at €6.3 million. The programme’s national Ministerial-level Steering Committee approved the new work areas and budget allocation in December 2020, together with an extension of the programme’s implementation period until July 2023.

382. Implementation of activities in 2020 was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions. The last fully presential workshop was organized in March 2020 when Module II of the UNCTAD Empowerment Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees was delivered in Luanda. Out of the 44 course participants, 32 were certified, and the first inputs for the National Trade Facilitation Strategy were drafted during the workshop. The component later organized a three-month online training with 30 participants and 20 certified attendees. Activities throughout the rest of the year

⁴³ UNCTAD, *Investment Policy Review of Angola* (Geneva 2019).

⁴⁴ International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Angola Country Report No. 21/17* (January 2021).

⁴⁵ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries Report 2020* (Geneva 2020).

were carried out online or in hybrid format. Under the Commercial Diplomacy component, an online training on negotiating techniques was organized, paving the way for continued support to ongoing trade negotiations processes. The Creative Economy component supported the establishment of a public sector Working Group on Cultural and Creative Industries to oversee the component's implementation, produced a draft State of Play report on the sector as well as two technical briefs, a plan for a training package and an action plan that were discussed in a national conversation with the Government and with the private sector. Under the Empretec component, work towards the National Entrepreneurship Strategy was advanced through the finalization of a Mapping of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and a consensus-building webinar. In addition, a series of trainings of trainers was organized online, and a session for former empretecos (participants trained through the Entrepreneurship Training Workshops in Angola) on mitigating against external shocks, such as COVID-19. Under the Investment Policy Review (IPR) component, a review of international investment agreements concluded by Angola was carried out, and Angolan participation was facilitated in a regional webinar for investment promotion agencies on Adapting to the New Normal. A webinar on cooperation for apiculture development in Angola organized under the National Green Export Review (NGER) component counted with participation from eight different provinces. Under the Transport and Logistics component, a focused webinar series providing on-the-job training on public-private partnership (PPP) project development for transport infrastructure, sharing the experiences of Brazil in the area, was delivered for a core group of officials engaged in developing PPP projects.

383. **Results/impact.** Thus far, 1,400 Angolans have benefited from training and policy-oriented activities, with about 26 per cent of them having taken part in multiple capacity-building activities thus consolidating their knowledge. The programme has exceeded its targets on both public and private sector actors trained. Thirty individuals have been trained as trainers, contributing to the sustainability of the action. The programme has helped to identify eight new green product categories with potential for exports as well as mapped the value chains and supported the development of action plans for seven (of expected five) derived products (honey, timber, coffee and four tropical fruits). At the outcome level, the programme has contributed to the development of policies, strategies and official briefs, with 60 per cent of the target delivered and 140 per cent expected at mid-term of programme implementation. This includes an Investment Policy Review of Angola, a review of international investment agreements concluded by the country, inputs to the PPP law and decree, a draft creative economy strategy and two policy briefs, a draft trade facilitation strategy, as well as a Mapping and Assessment Report of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Angola contributing to the development of a National Entrepreneurship Strategy. At the impact level, despite the difficult conditions, the value of total exports to SADC countries has increased since 2016. At the same time, a slight reduction in the share of non-oil exports to the world is observed, and a decrease in investment inflows.

3. Trade-related capacity-building in the least developed countries

Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries

384. **Development context.** Contributions to the multi-donor Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries are aimed at enhancing the capacity of member States, in particular the least developed countries, to design and implement trade and development-related policies.

385. **Objectives.** The objective of the Trust Fund is to provide LDCs with alternative and targeted policy options as well as assist them in developing their capacities to participate fully in multilateral trade negotiations and implement trade and development-related policies.

386. **Outputs.** In 2020, the Trust Fund for Least Developed Countries was utilized to support the dissemination of a new comprehensive manual *Building and Utilizing Productive Capacities in Africa and the LDCs: A Holistic and Practical Guide* (UNCTAD/ALDC/INF/2020/1). Funds supported the final desktop publishing and printing of the document, necessary for a wide dissemination to member states. The development of

productive capacities is increasingly recognized as a fundamental step in transforming the economies of African countries and the LDCs and putting them on a sustained development path. Within the wider UNCTAD programme of work on productive capacities, including the development of the Productive Capacities Index, a series of virtual briefings were organized for member States in Geneva, New York and Addis Ababa. Key messages and policy guidance from the above-mentioned Manual were shared with member States, enhancing their knowledge base, and equipping them with a range of policy options to support the building, maintenance, and utilization of productive capacities. Due to the travel restrictions and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020, UNCTAD dissemination efforts were quickly adapted to virtual formats and online interactive sessions. The Trust Fund was also utilized to support the delivery of an Ambassadorial-level retreat for the Group of Least Developed Countries on “Productive capacities and structural transformation – On the road to LDC V”, held on 19 February 2020. The retreat enabled Geneva-based Ambassadors to engage with UNCTAD experts to assess the progress achieved by the LDCs in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (2011–2020) in key areas within the mandate of UNCTAD; share findings of UNCTAD work on LDCs of relevance to the LDC V process; present the UNCTAD Productive Capacities Index, as it applies to LDCs; and identify issues and priorities for action by LDCs, in view of the preparation for LDC V and of the negotiation of the plan of action for the coming decade.

387. **Results.** As a result of UNCTAD support, key stakeholders from LDCs, based in Geneva, New York, Addis Ababa and beyond are better informed of the policy issues and challenges facing their countries in the development, maintenance, and utilization of productive capacities. The evidence and policy guidance presented in the UNCTAD manual on productive capacities and the practical tools such as the Productive Capacities Index (PCI) provide concrete instruments for policymakers to build evidence, conduct analysis and design more targeted policies. They also serve as powerful monitoring tools over the medium to long term to help countries benchmark performance and adapt and adjust implementation strategies accordingly.

4. Mobilizing Financial Resources for Development

4.1. *Response and recovery: Mobilising Financial resources for Development in the time of COVID-19*

388. **Development context.** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the economic, financial and debt vulnerabilities of low-income and middle-income developing countries (LICs and MICs), leaving their economies ravaged and floundering, and potentially undoing progress made toward sustainable development and the achievement of 2030 Agenda.

389. In face of these challenges, the project “Response and Recovery: Mobilising financial resources for development in the time of COVID-19” responds to a call to action by the United Nations General Assembly, made in its resolution 74/270, adopted on 3 April 2020, that calls upon the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, to work with all relevant actors in order to mobilize a coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies.

390. The project focuses on the mobilisation of financial resources for development, one pillar of Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnership for the goals), specifically targets 17.1, 17.3 and 17.4. Moreover, a successful response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is required for attaining environmentally sustainable economic growth with decent work and simultaneously reducing inequalities. Therefore, the project is also linked to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 13 (climate action).

391. The initiative, under the coordination of the Debt and Development Finance Branch of UNCTAD, brings together UNCTAD and the regional commissions for Africa (ECA), Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), ensuring

global reach and regional presence as well as international cooperation and expertise sharing. Each of the regional partners is engaged in mutually enhancing workstreams.

392. UNCTAD provides diagnostics on the COVID-19 pandemic fallout on the macro-financial conditions and debt vulnerabilities of selected LICs and MICs in order to strengthen their capacity to design responses to the pandemic aligned with the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

393. These diagnostics build on UNCTAD expertise in (a) designing global macroeconomic scenarios through the Global Policy Model (GPM); (b) assessing developing countries' financial conditions based on the Financial Conditions Indicator (FCI); (c) analysing the debt capacity of countries to meet the most significant Sustainable Development Goals; and (d) elaborating proposals for improving the international debt restructuring architecture and promoting soft-law principles for responsible borrowing and lending. The project enhances UNCTAD expertise that stems from both the analytical work on macro-financial and debt issues and the intergovernmental work on Financing for Development (FfD) of the Division of Globalization and Development Strategies.

394. **Objectives and features.** The objective of the project is to strengthen diagnostic and policy design capacity of the relevant macroeconomic, fiscal and debt financing authorities in selected LICs and MICs in order to respond appropriately and innovatively to the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure a recovery that enables the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

395. The project is organized through three related and mutually supportive thematic clusters that address key macro-financial, fiscal and debt issues arising from the COVID-19 crisis. As an ongoing legacy, the project has a web-based virtual knowledge platform with information on its outputs accessible by member countries and the public.

396. Cluster one, "Macro-financial needs assessments and possible policy responses to the COVID-19 shock", provides an analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic fallout on the macro-financial conditions of developing countries in general, with special attention to LICs and MICs, through three workstreams that assess (a) how the global macroeconomic developments are likely to affect developing countries – based on the UNCTAD Global Policy Model (GPM); (b) the liquidity options open to developing countries in terms of the Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN) – the set of global, regional and bilateral institutional agreements that provides temporary liquidity response in times of financial crises – and effective use of these options on the global, regional and bilateral level; and (c) the Financial Conditions Indicator (FCI) providing a honed regional picture for the most vulnerable countries whose sparse data precludes country specific analysis. The main aim of this cluster is to provide diagnostics in order to design responses to the pandemic.

397. Cluster two, "Making debt work for development", focuses on sustainable recovery even given existing and accumulating debt vulnerabilities of selected beneficiary countries. This cluster is organized in three workstreams that provide (a) analysis of the development finance needs of beneficiary countries to achieve the most significant Sustainable Development Goals taking as point of departure UNCTAD Gap-analysis tool that estimated the impact of achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1–4 on public debt sustainability of selected developing countries; (b) assessment of current initiatives and proposals to address unsustainable debt burdens in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations on revitalizing UNCTAD (2012) Principles of Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing in a national and international context; and (c) innovative financing instruments and other initiatives to alleviate the debt burden facing highly indebted ECLAC countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

398. Cluster three, "Macroeconomic and fiscal strategies to recover from the COVID-19 crisis", focuses on policy recommendations for recovery for beneficiary countries. Its three workstreams provide (a) policy recommendations on capital account management measures for developing countries and a macroprudential policy options document for beneficiary countries in Latin American and the Caribbean; (b) a Tax Policy Framework for beneficiary African Countries; and (c) policy recommendations on balanced and inclusive fiscal policy package for beneficiary countries in Asia and the Pacific.

399. **Outputs.** The project is ongoing and is in the process of delivering practical tools, research papers and other outputs. UNCTAD work mainly focuses on cluster one Macro-financial needs assessments and possible policy responses to the COVID-19 shock and cluster two, Making debt work for development. Specifically, UNCTAD delivered in 2020 the following outputs:

(a) Forward-looking policy scenarios based on the expansion and update of the current World Database (WD) and the Global Policy Model (GPM) that cover a “baseline” scenario (no policy changes) and scenarios with policy strategies that could help developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Research paper discussing macroeconomic policy options, main challenges and risks, with a focus on the potential for financial vulnerability (or alternatively, improvements over such vulnerabilities) in selected developing countries and groups;

(c) Research paper discussing the macroeconomic implications for selected developing countries of climate adaptation strategies, especially in the context of shocks and structural bottlenecks highlighted in the GPM exercise;

(d) The real-time Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN) tracker – updated on a monthly basis on liquidity options and use of these options on the global, regional and bilateral level for all 193 United Nations member countries during the ongoing COVID-19 related crisis, launched through several regional virtual workshops;

(e) Sustainable Development Finance Assessment (SDFA) framework that will identify the development finance needs of selected beneficiary countries to achieve structural transformation through the most significant Sustainable Development Goals and how to make this compatible with external financial sustainability and public debt sustainability; and

(f) Policy brief on deteriorating debt sustainability in developing countries.

400. **Results.** By the end of 2020, UNCTAD had delivered key outputs for the achievement of project outcomes. Within cluster one, the forward-looking policy scenarios and research papers based on the expanded and updated version of the GPM as well as the GFSN tracker has contributed to enhancing the capability of beneficiary developing countries to undertake macro-financial needs assessments as well as to identify possible policy responses to the COVID-19 shock, considering pre-COVID funding gaps, current global challenges and the 2030 Agenda. Cluster two has already provided two outputs related to the diagnostic of the financial vulnerabilities of beneficiary countries. While the policy brief addresses the debt sustainability of developing countries and the international initiatives and proposals to tackle the unsustainable debt burdens in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SDFA framework will enable the assessment of the development finance needs of two beneficiary countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1–4 without jeopardizing external financial sustainability and public debt sustainability.

4.2. *United Nations joint programme Haiti in Crisis: A National Consultation on Reform Priorities and Financing Options for Accelerated Sustainable Development Goal Achievement*

401. **Development context.** The development landscape in Haiti is highly challenging. About 6 million Haitians out of the total population of 11.3 million live below the poverty line. This figure is only marginally better than at the start of this Millennium, and the limited progress is expected to have been entirely eroded as a result of the most recent crises. Haiti had set an objective of becoming a middle-income country by 2030, with extreme poverty then at 3 per cent. Considering demographic growth, it would require the country to grow at 7 per cent per year from now on to reach this target. Since the formulation of the Strategic Development Plan for Haiti in 2012, growth has been just above 1 per cent in the better years, and negative as of 2019. After two successive years of negative GDP growth (mainly as a result of uninterrupted expressions of wide-spread discontent), 2020 saw an additional and major impact of COVID-19 on the economy, with

the economy estimated to have lost between 4 to 5 per cent of its value in 2020.⁴⁶ The GDP of Haiti was 8 290 million in current United States dollars in 2019. Haiti's exports are highly concentrated, with 86 per cent of merchandise exports in textiles mainly targeting the US market.⁴⁷

402. The February 2020 Integrated Strategic Framework for Haiti, as requested by the Security Council, underlines the importance and urgency for Haiti to address the development financing challenge. This includes structural, policy and reform issues. The important responsibility assigned to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies en Haïti or BINUH), in terms of the Secretary-General's Special Representative's and Deputy Special Representative's "Good Offices" function, provides a major value added to the capacity of the United Nations system in Haiti to advocate for – and obtain commitment towards – those policy change and reform imperatives, and is thus particularly important and timely for this United Nations joint programme. In particular, one of the thematic mandates of BINUH is the "Promotion of inclusive and comprehensive inter-Haitian dialogue efforts to encourage national consensus on the country's priorities, as well as the implementation of political, legislative and structural reforms".

403. **Objectives and features.** The joint programme will help Haiti to assess financing options for the achievement of the National Sustainable Development Goal Strategy and to formulate and implement comprehensive action plans and, where required, policy reforms to mobilize such funds in a way that is best aligned with the National Sustainable Development Goal Strategy goals.

404. Identified scenarios for financial mobilization will in turn lead to the possible revision in the current Sustainable Development Goal Strategy and Goals, in which financing options and challenges have as of now not been considered.

405. While the programme implementation will be, on the United Nations side, co-led by UNDP and UNCTAD, the entire Haiti United Nations country team, as well as non-resident agencies with a particularly strong mandate or expertise in this subject area, will be associated with the project and under the leadership of Resident Coordinator, as co-implementing partners or by sharing their accumulated global and Haiti-specific relevant expertise and lessons learned.

406. The programme will ensure a broad-based national consultation in defining strategies, priorities and goals, as well as regular exchange with other key partners from the private, the non-governmental or financial sector, Multilateral Development Banks (the World Bank) and international partners.

407. At the end of the programme, the continuation of regular strategy updating will be fully institutionalized and capacities to support this strengthened. A strong, Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation (MPCE)-coordinated monitoring and evaluation capacity will be developed, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and others, so as to ensure continuous and joint assessment and strategic updating of financing strategies as well as the fullest possible contribution of all mobilized financing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

408. The UNCTAD contribution focuses on exploring and stimulating the potential of the private sector to become a stronger pillar generating funds for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Haiti.

409. **Outputs and results.** The programme received funds in July 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most activities could not take place in this context. However, the programme team and management structures were set up and initial meetings carried out. In October 2020, UNCTAD launched research on the potential and constraints of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the country. UNCTAD participated in the delivery of a webinar targeting the private and public sectors in the framework of the Sustainable Development

⁴⁶ Haiti in Crisis: A National Consultation on Reform Priorities and Financing Options for Accelerated Sustainable Development Goal Achievement.

⁴⁷ UNCTADstat database.

Goals week in December 2020, presenting early findings of the fisheries and aquaculture research as well as the Empretec Programme, including a testimonial from an Angolan Empretec participant.

III. Theme C: Fostering economic efficiency, improving governance

410. Efficient market and effective and development-focused States are indispensable for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Market can play a useful role in the allocation of resources. However, without proper regulatory mechanisms, there are risks of market failures including abuses of monopoly power, negative externalities and inequality. It is the role of the States to correct market failures, create an enabling legal, regulatory and institutional framework and provide right incentives for market players to contribute more effectively towards sustainable development.

411. UNCTAD technical cooperation supports developing countries in fostering economic efficiency and improving governance. In particular, it helps to establish pro-competitive regulations, facilitate trade and business by removing bureaucratic barriers to trade and investment, mainstream sustainability into international investment agreements, and strengthen statistical capacity to formulate sound economic policies.

412. In this section, nine products under the theme “Fostering economic efficiency, improving governance” are reported on. The reports highlight main technical cooperation activities carried out in 2020 and key results to date. Technical cooperation projects that are pertinent to the aforementioned theme, but not linked with any of the existing nine products in this thematic area are reported on under “C99 Other”.

C1 Voluntary peer reviews of competition and consumer protection laws and policies

Table C1

Voluntary Peer Reviews of Competition and Consumer Protection Laws and Policies

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/8X/603	Training programmes on restrictive business practices (competition policies)	1986–	Multi-donors

413. **Development context.** UNCTAD voluntary peer reviews of competition and consumer protection laws and policies allow developing countries to benchmark their legislative and institutional frameworks against international best practices. They also provide an opportunity for reviewed agencies to self-evaluate their enforcement performance. The reviews are conducted using an interactive peer review method that promotes knowledge-sharing between competition authorities and consumer protection agencies at the regional and international levels, enhances informal cooperation networks and encourages both North–South and South–South cooperation.

414. **Objectives and features.** The reviews assess the features of the legal and institutional frameworks, the enforcement record and the perceptions of these laws and policies by relevant stakeholders. The reviews identify major procedural, administrative, and legislative changes that might be necessary for the effective law enforcement and for the optimum functioning of the competition and consumer protection authorities. They provide insights into country-specific constraints, including political and economic challenges that restrict effective enforcement of the laws in question. The reviews serve as a basis for peer review examination during the annual meetings of the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Groups of Experts (IGE) on Competition Law and Policy and on Consumer Protection Law and Policy and during the United Nations Conferences to

Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices. The presentation and discussion of the peer review report is usually followed by a dissemination in the country and by a technical cooperation project led by UNCTAD to support the implementation of the report's key recommendations.

415. **Outputs.** In 2020, UNCTAD carried out the voluntary peer review of the consumer protection law and policy of Peru as well as a second voluntary peer review of competition law and policy of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the only regional economic organization whose competition rules were subject to this exercise twice. During the Eighth United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices, UNCTAD welcomed the requests for the voluntary peer review of the consumer protection law and policy of Chile and the voluntary peer review of competition law and policy of Malawi, which will be presented and discussed in 2021.

416. Voluntary Peer Review of Consumer Protection Law and Policy of Peru. The voluntary peer review on consumer protection law and policy of Peru, the third exercise facilitated by UNCTAD, was held in October 2020. UNCTAD is the only international organization conducting voluntary peer reviews of consumer protection law and policy.

417. **Peru** is a country in South America with a population of more than 31 million inhabitants and shares borders with Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. In 2018, Peru was allocated a value of 0.759 in the United Nations Development Programme human development index, placing it in the high human development category and positioning it at 82 out of 189 countries and territories.⁴⁸

418. The Constitution of Peru of 1993 contains an explicit reference to consumer protection in article 65, which provides: "The State defends the interests of consumers and service users. To this end, it guarantees the right to information in respect of the goods and services available on the market. It is also responsible for ensuring, in particular, the health and safety of the population." On the basis of the Constitution, Peru has established a strong legislative and public policy framework for consumer protection, whose principal legal instrument in the area of consumer protection is the Consumer Code (Act No. 29571, 14 August 2010). The Peruvian legislature's decision to systematize consumer protection legislation in the form of a code takes due account of the specific nature of the subject matter and the need to ensure that consumer protection is reflected in all relevant legislation. This codification has also allowed for the systematic and coherent arrangement of consumer protection law, which helps to provide legal certainty, despite other bodies of legislation complementing or supplementing it.

419. The Consumer Code establishes the National Integrated Consumer Protection System, which comprises principles, rules, procedures, techniques, and instruments designed to harmonize public policies and optimize the activities of relevant State authorities. The system is administrated by the National Consumer Protection Council, a coordinating body attached to the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers and chaired by INDECOPI, the National Institute for the Defence of Competition and Protection of Intellectual Property, thereby the focal point and principal agency for matters relating to consumer protection as the national consumer protection authority.

420. The consumer arbitration model is free and binding, being administered throughout the country by regional and local governments, other public entities and legal persons and the regional offices of INDECOPI. It involves mediation between providers, consumer associations and the public authorities. The complaints book is an internal review mechanism that all businesses are required to make available to consumers upon request, in physical or virtual form, so that they can submit complaints or claims.

⁴⁸ United Nations Development Programme, "Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century: Briefing note for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report – Peru", *Human Development Report 2019*.

421. Consumer associations are also regulated under the National Integrated Consumer Protection System, following the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection, which recommend that consumer associations should be independent. The Consumer Code provides for a system of funding whereby associations receive a percentage of the funds raised through fines and sanctions to cover the legal expenses incurred by their lawyers.

422. The assessment of the country's consumer protection law and policy concluded that Peru has a strong consumer protection system, which has achieved many nationally and internationally recognized successes. The legislative and public policy framework is extensive and balanced and integrates almost all of the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection and various international best practices. The institutional framework for consumer protection is equally satisfactory. INDECOPI, as the main consumer protection agency, fulfils its role as the leader of the inter-institutional coordination system and combines this with effective enforcement of legislation. Furthermore, INDECOPI has established a prestigious public profile, both among public, associative, and private institutions and among consumers in general. Other public institutions with a stake in consumer protection are actively involved in consumer protection activities. The private and associative sectors are dynamic and have contributed to the establishment of a strong culture of consumer protection in Peru.

423. The report identified some areas where improvements could be made to strengthen consumer protection, with regard to which various recommendations were formulated. Many of these recommendations were directed towards INDECOPI, as the main consumer protection agency, while others related to areas that are outside of the jurisdiction of INDECOPI and are addressed to other institutions in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the associative and private sectors.

424. Regarding the legislative framework, it was recommended that the Government improve consumers redress through a single procedure for consumer complaints before all competent public bodies, including a single portal for submitting complaints and single-person settlement bodies or new forms of summary settlement. Also, consumer associations and ad hoc consumer groups should be permitted to bring collective action directly before the courts, without prior authorization from INDECOPI. Furthermore, a review of existing consumer protection policies to accommodate the special features of electronic commerce and ensure that consumers and businesses are informed and aware of their rights and obligations in the digital marketplace, drawing on international best practices such as those set out in the OECD recommendations and in the United Nations guidelines for consumer protection was also recommended. Another recommendation suggested greater attention towards vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, especially poor persons in rural areas, who should be a special focus of public policy. INDECOPI regional offices' capacities should be enhanced and further educational campaigns should be developed, promoting multilingual initiatives and fostering collaboration with entities that have deep roots in areas with a high concentration of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers.

425. Other recommendations referred to a better consideration of consumer protection into higher-level national policies, and the enhanced collaboration within the National Integrated Consumer Protection System, especially of regional and local governments in consumer protection; to the promotion of amicable settlement of disputes and their handling by the private sector, by making full use of existing means of dispute resolution, such as conciliation, mediation, and consumer arbitration. The strengthening of the consumer product safety by INDECOPI through an alert system, formal communication channels between entities responsible for recalling products and further education and awareness raising among consumers and businesses was suggested. Furthermore, it was recommended that INDECOPI improve inter-agency cooperation on consumer protection in the area of financial services and of consumer privacy and data protection; and continue to be actively engaged in the international and regional cooperation in consumer protection, particularly with regard to the enforcement of legislation and the settlement of cross-border disputes.

426. Australia, Italy and the United States, acting as peer reviewers, raised various questions during the question-and-answer session. They asked Peru questions on the protection of its vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers, the funding of consumer associations, the interaction between government institutions with interests in consumer

protection, enforcement powers in digital markets, international cooperation, and collective redress. In turn, Peru asked reviewers on the use of behavioural insights in consumer product safety, regional networks for cross-border enforcement cooperation and policymaking in the digital economy.

427. Voluntary Peer Review of Competition Law and Policy of WAEMU. The second voluntary peer review of competition law and policy of the WAEMU was held in October 2020. WAEMU is the first and only regional economic organization of developing countries to have undergone this exercise, which took place for the first time in Geneva during the meeting of the UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy in July 2007.

428. The success of the first peer review greatly contributed to the large audience enjoyed by WAEMU within UNCTAD, the only international framework where competition issues are discussed at the multilateral level adapted to the specificities of economies in transition, developing countries and least developed countries in particular.

429. More than 10 years later, an ex-post evaluation of the recommendations from the first peer review exercise was necessary for taking stock of the organization's progress in the enforcement of competition law and policy and to determine improvements that had to be made to the current system, taking into account the new development that are the establishment of a community framework on competition within the *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)* and the prospect of the adoption of rules at the continental level, to support the recent African Continental Free Trade Area. This second peer review was also an opportunity for the WAEMU Commission to relaunch cooperation with more experienced competition authorities and to mobilize technical assistance focused on strengthening the operational capacities of the regional structure and national competition agencies.

430. Indeed, the implementation of the community competition policy is one of the tools for achieving the objectives set out in the WAEMU Treaty. The Commission operates within an institutional framework that gives it exclusive competence to sanction anticompetitive practices observed in the common market, whether or not they affect trade. The role of the WAEMU member States, through their national competition authorities, is to work with the Commission by monitoring how markets are functioning, providing support to the Commission when it carries out enquiries or checks, cataloguing State aid and participating in the decision-making process. This area is a priority and the WAEMU Commission's efforts have been considerable to bolster the integration process, implementing activities to improve its performance and that of the national competition authorities through numerous initiatives and joint training sessions to improve skills for staff and officials, with a view to increasing cooperation. However, how powers should be divided between the Commission and the national authorities remains unresolved, as there has been no clear political or high-level legal guidance to tackle this important issue.

431. A report ordered by the Commission in 2011⁴⁹ strongly recommended that new institutional and legislative structures be put in place at the regional and national levels in order to ensure the effective enforcement of the community competition rules. The reforms considered should encompass substantive rules, namely improving the substantive rules on the control of concentrations creating a system of a priori control; and also, the distribution of powers, procedures, and institutions, being carried out at the regional and national levels. National legal frameworks entailed the establishment of independent national competition authorities with sole decision-making power in the control of anticompetitive practices, functionally separated from trade ministries and with the adequate human and budgetary resources to be fully independent from the executive branch. In addition, the WAEMU competition regime should include rules on the control of concentrations in line with the new community framework. The Commission should oversee the work devoted to the transposition of national laws to the community competition framework to ensure that some

⁴⁹ Mor Bakhoun, "Cohérence institutionnelle et effectivité d'une politique régionale de la concurrence: le cas de l'Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA)", *Revue internationale de droit économique*, vol. XXV, No. 3 (2011), pp. 305–332.

national laws (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali) are fully in line with the community framework.

432. One of the major challenges in the regional integration process in West Africa is the need for convergence between the interventions of WAEMU and the ECOWAS bodies, which have similar objectives. In 1999, WAEMU and ECOWAS signed a cooperation agreement, which includes competition, and since the establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority in 2019, there has been renewed interest in seeking how the two competition frameworks can be harmonized. Other recommendations include a mechanism for consultations between the two regional authorities, and criteria for determining the jurisdiction of each authority, namely regarding merger control, the relationship with the national competition authorities, as well the pooling of resources to carry out studies and enquiries.

433. The report prepared for the ex post review concluded that progress had certainly been made in the application of the WAEMU common competition policy since the 2007 peer review. The results obtained are significant, especially as concerns the control of government measures that distort competition. There has also been an increase in cases relating to the practices of private enterprises. However, there remains the important question of the division of powers between the regional authority and national agencies, which continues to demand more authority in handling cases. Indeed, the Commission has sought to involve member State officials in inquiries, investigations, and the preparation of decisions; however, no changes have been made in that regard to the institutional framework (at the national and regional levels) for implementing community competition rules. It is also important to undertake reforms in order to make the legal system compatible with the ECOWAS, since there is currently a serious risk of inconsistencies in the application of both rights.

434. The report also identified some areas where improvements could be made to strengthen competition policy and law of the region, with regard to which various recommendations were formulated, including on the update of community rules and regulations to include leniency and compliance programmes; the adoption and/or revision of national competition laws in line with the regional rules; the reorganization of the relationship between the Commission and the national competition authorities; the strengthening of capacity-building of the Commission and the national competition authorities; the establishment of a regional network of competition authorities; the advocacy of competition law and policy to relevant stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, consumers and business associations; a cooperation framework with ECOWAS; UNCTAD support through technical assistance in implementing the required legislative reforms and recommendations from the peer review exercise, among others.

435. Tunisia, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Professor of the ZHAW School of Management and Law and former Deputy Director of the Swiss Competition Commission, acting as peer reviewers, raised various questions during the question-and-answer session. They asked WAEMU representative about aspects relating to the application of Community law, the relationship with the member States and future prospects. In particular, they asked about coordination between the WAEMU Commission and the national authorities and on the need to establish synergies mechanism with ECOWAS given the risk of collision and inconsistencies in the application of both competition regimes affecting the same member States.

436. The secretariat presented a proposal for technical assistance to implement the peer review recommendations, whose overall goal was to improve WAEMU legislative and institutional frameworks for regional competition law and policy. In particular, both WAEMU and its member States must reform their regulations in a coordinated manner and take account of ECOWAS rules in doing so.

437. Regarding the voluntary peer review of the consumer protection law and policy of Chile, UNCTAD conducted a fact-finding mission to collect data and information; identified the panel of peer reviewers; and drafted the peer review report including findings and recommendations on how to improve the consumer protection regime.

438. The voluntary peer review of competition law and policy of Malawi was similarly subject of information gathering from the Competition Commission of Malawi and from the public and private stakeholders of the country, the peer review report having been started.

439. The presentation and discussions of the reports of both reviews will take place in 2021 during the fifth session of the IGE on Consumer Protection Law and Policy and the nineteenth session of the IGE on Competition Law and Policy respectively, held by UNCTAD.

440. **Results and impact.** The UNCTAD secretariat outlined two tailor-made technical assistance projects, respectively for Peru and WAEMU, for the implementation of the respective peer review recommendations, and invited other authorities and development partners to assist Peru and WAEMU in improving policies, enhancing enforcement capacities, and developing a consumer protection and competition culture. Due to the current pandemic situation, the dissemination activities of both peer reviews will be conducted virtually during 2021.

441. Although it is too soon to assess the impact of the peer review in Peru, as legal and policy recommendations take considerable time to be implemented, the Government of Peru already requested UNCTAD to continue supporting the consumer protection agency INDECOPI in technical cooperation and capacity-building, including through specialized training for consumer protection officials. A series of such trainings is scheduled for 2021, which should also benefit officials from the other 17 Latin American member countries of the UNCTAD COMPAL Programme.⁵⁰

442. It is expected that the new competition regime that will emerge from the ex post review of the WAEMU competition regime will contribute to the improvement of the business environment in West Africa with a view to building a competitive subregional economy, better integrated into the world economy, and stimulating growth and inclusive sustainable development.

C2 Business facilitation

Table C2
Business facilitation

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
BHU/0T/HAF	Business Facilitation eRegulations Bhutan (EIF)	2018–	United Nations Office for Project Services – Switzerland
CMR/0T/IBH	European Union-Extension du système my business.cm au Cameroun	2020–	European Union
CUB/0T/IAM	SPEED E-regulation	2019–	European Union
IRQ/0T/HAH	Business Facilitation in Iraq	2018–	Public Donation
LES/0T/HAG	Business Facilitation in Lesotho	2018–	Lesotho
LIB/0T/IBS	eRegulation System Libya	2020–	Agence française d'expertise

⁵⁰ See <https://unctadcompal.org/>.

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
			technique internationale
MYA/OT/HBI	United Nations Trade Cluster Myanmar	2019–	United Nations Office for Project Services – Switzerland
NIR/OT/IAU	Strengthening the Nigeria Trade information Portal (GIZ Germany)	2020–	Germany
URT/OT/FBC	UNDAF II, inclusive Growth 2016 DRTF	2017–	One United Nations
INT/OT/6AT	Business Facilitation Multi-donor Fund	2006–	Multi-donor
INT/OT/H CJ	Strategic Partnership the Netherlands	2018–	Netherlands
INT/OT/IBF	European Union-Trade – Establishment of a Trade Facilitation Portal Burkina Faso and Jordan	2020–	International Trade Centre
INT/OT/IBG	European Union-Trade Related Assistance Project – Establishment of a Trade Facilitation Portal, Burundi, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	2020–	International Trade Centre
RAF/OT/IAO	UNCTAD – TMEA Cooperation on Trade Facilitation	2019–	Trade Mark East Africa
RAS/OT/HAQ	Transparency in Trade Regulation and Facilitation in PACER Plus	2018–	Australia, New Zealand
ROA-2023 (W12)	Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector	2020–	Development Account

443. **Development context.** The business facilitation programme has developed a series of web-based e-government systems to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition improve their investment, trade and business climates through transparency, simplification and the automation of rules and procedures related to enterprise creation and operations. The eRegulations system is a turnkey e-government software allowing administrations to publish their procedures online (online information portals for businesses, traders and investors). Trade portals are information portals, derived from the eRegulations system, showing detailed information on import, export and transit procedures and allowing countries to comply with the article 1 of the WTO Bali agreement. Once procedures have been clarified through the eRegulations/trade portal systems, a set of 10 principles of simplification of administrative procedures helps countries cut bureaucratic procedures and reduce the duration, cost and complexity of business-related procedures without changing related laws. Simplified procedures can then be automated through another e-government system called eRegistrations, which builds online single windows for businesses and investors.⁵¹

444. **Objectives and features.** All tools and services developed by the business facilitation programme aim to: improve the business and investment climate and legal frameworks; lower administrative barriers to business development, in particular for small businesses; increase domestic and foreign investment and trade, promote good governance

⁵¹ See <https://unctad.org/topic/enterprise-development/business-facilitation>.

and reduce corruption. The programme contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 1.3 (implement appropriate social protection systems), 8.3 (encourage the formalization and growth of MSMEs); 16.3 (promote the rule of law); 16.5 (sustainably reduce corruption and bribery); 16.6 (develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions); 16.10 (ensure public access to information); and 17.1 (strengthen domestic resource mobilization).

445. **Outputs.** In 2020, faced with the global COVID-19 pandemic, countries have been using UNCTAD online digital platforms to continue providing essential services to businesses. In Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, a special COVID-19 menu was added to the national trade portal systems informing traders in real time on the trade related emergency and simplification measures. Burkina Faso resumed the update of its step-by-step information guide on business creation procedures through the Burkina Faso eRegulations portal.

446. The Cuba Trade Portal and the Bhutan eRegulations portal were officially launched, giving access to step-by-step information on 74 and 273 procedures respectively, related to import, export, business creation and operation.

447. In Bhutan, Cuba, Iraq and Lesotho new services were automated through the eRegistrations systems. Prior to the configuration of the services in each country, the procedures were thoroughly analysed and simplified through the eRegulations system by merging forms and removing unnecessary or redundant requirements. The agencies involved in the procedures actively participated in the simplification process. The automated services will be utilized in 2021.

448. New eRegulations/trade portal systems were configured for Burundi, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania). National civil servants were trained on the methodology of information collection and registration in the system. In Cameroon, an analysis of business registration procedures was launched in four new regions – Bertoua, Maroua, Ngaoundéré and Limbe. The business registration procedure will be automated in these four regions using the eRegistrations system in 2021.

449. New procedures on import, export and transit operations were documented in the eRegulations/trade portals of Cuba, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania (mainland), Uganda and Zanzibar.

450. In El Salvador, the Cuentamype system was put in use for a pilot group of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Cuentamype is a unique platform through which SMEs can comply with all administrative obligations (mandatory registrations and licences), obtain and store all licences and certificates online, keep their business accounts and pay taxes.

451. **Results.** The results and impacts of activities are detailed below.

452. *Transparency.* Procedures documented in an eRegulations system are completely transparent and widely accessible in all countries where the system is operational. A total of 7,800 procedures are documented in national eRegulations/trade portal systems, with approximately 22,000 steps (interactions between a user and a public entity), 53,100 forms, 7,584 norms and laws accessible online and over 5,800 civil servants and entities with contact data. In 2020, over 4,800,000 people visited national and regional eRegulations websites worldwide.

453. *Simplification and harmonization.* As a result of clarification of trade and investment-related procedures through the eRegulations/trade portal systems and the simplifications proposed, the following achievements were obtained:

(a) In Kenya, for the 42 procedures having undergone simplification, 46 steps were eliminated, 64 required documents were removed, 16 steps can now be completed online instead of in person, administrative cost savings to the sum of K Sh194,780 were achieved, and 69 hours were saved.

(b) In Rwanda, for the 28 procedures having undergone simplification, 23 steps were eliminated, 26 required documents were removed, 42 steps can now be completed

online, administrative cost savings to the sum of RF155,058 were achieved, and 3 hours were saved.

(c) In the United Republic of Tanzania, for the seven procedures having undergone simplification, two steps were eliminated, 10 can now be completed online and one required document was removed.

(d) In Uganda, for the seven procedures having undergone simplification, four steps were eliminated, eight can now be completed online, 15 required documents were removed, and administrative cost savings to the sum of U Sh222,354 were achieved.

454. *Automation of procedures.* The eRegistrations system is an e-government system, designed to set up electronic single windows and computerize simple or complex administrative procedures. The Benin eRegistrations system, monentreprise.bj, was officially launched allowing businesses to register and get all their certificates online in less than 3 hours. The system makes Benin one of the most efficient countries in business registry worldwide on a par with developed economies such as Denmark, Estonia and New Zealand. In Bhutan, the Ministry of Economic Affairs adopted eRegistrations as the engine for automating procedures in the context of its integrated business licensing system (IBLS) programme. The IBLS foresees the progressive automation of 226 government services. In Lesotho, business licensing is now available online for trading and manufacturing through eRegistrations.

455. *Exchange of good practice and South–South cooperation.* National experts in Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cuba, El Salvador, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania have trained civil servants of their countries or provinces on the use of the eRegulations/trade portal and eRegistrations system and on the UNCTAD methodology for the simplification of procedures. Experts from El Salvador and Guatemala presented their country experience with eRegulations and eRegistrations systems in Cuba and Paraguay.

456. *Good governance and public participation.* The programme encourages public–private dialogue on improving the regulatory framework and its application by national administrations. Through a built-in query module of the eRegulations system, foreign and local businesses sent 419 queries to seek assistance on complying with registrations, report delays or missing information. System owners act as the focal points among the agencies whose procedures are documented in the eRegulations systems. Most queries received through the portal were dealt within less than 24 hours or referred to the responsible agency for further processing.

C3 Trade facilitation

Table C3
Trade facilitation

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/OT/FBK	European Union-UNCTAD Joint Programme Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
PAR/OT/IBT	Strengthening capacity of National Trade Facilitation Committee in Paraguay	2020–	World Bank
INT/OT/HBG	HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Trade Facilitation Agreement Capacity-Building Programme	2018–	United Kingdom
INT/OT/ICF	HMRC-WCO-UNCTAD Trade Facilitation Agreement Capacity-Building Programme	2020–	United Kingdom

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
RAF/0T/DCG ^a	GIZ-Trade Policy and Trade Promotion Fund	..	Germany
RAF/0T/IAO	UNCTAD-TMEA Cooperation on Trade Facilitation	2019–	Trade Mark East Africa
RAF/0T/IBO	Projet d'Appui institutionnel à la mise en oeuvre de l'accord sur la facilitation des échanges de l'OMC en Afrique Centrale	2020–	African Development Bank
RAS/0T/HAQ	Transparency in Trade Regulation and Facilitation in PACER Plus	2018–	Australia, New Zealand
ROA-2023 (X12)	Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics	2020–	Development Account

^a Operationally but not financially completed or fully completed in 2020.

457. **Development context.** Trade facilitation has over recent years been recognized as a key element of national trade and development policies. The main objective of trade facilitation is to make cross-border trade of goods simpler, faster and cheaper, while maintaining efficient compliance controls such as ensuring collection of duties, taxes, and observing product standards.

458. The focus on trade facilitation had already increased following the entry into force on 22 February 2017 of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement. To date 153 of the 164 Member countries of WTO have ratified the agreement and are implementing the obligations contained therein. The agreement aims to reduce trade transaction costs and bureaucratic barriers, speeding up clearance procedures for the cross-border trade of goods, thereby making trade easier, faster and less costly.

459. In 2020, the development focus on trade facilitation gained further momentum in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital, paperless and electronic trade facilitation solutions became important tools to ensure that cross border trade could continue to flow, while at the same time ensuring that the transmission of the coronavirus was minimized.

460. In addition, the alignment of national and regional rules with the multilateral trade facilitation framework, for example through adoption and implementation of regional and subregional trade agreements, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, is instrumental to achieving a harmonized global trade facilitation framework.

461. Trade facilitation reforms are associated with several Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 10, aiming at reducing inequality within and among countries, and Goal 16, which promotes inclusive societies, with access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. UNCTAD work supporting national trade facilitation committees (NTFCs) directly supports the compliance with article 23.2 of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, as well as target 17 of Goal 17 on “effective public, public–private and civil society partnerships”.

462. Successfully implemented trade facilitation measures not only boost trade but also improve revenue collection, health, safety and security compliance controls, and they can also help to streamline government agencies. Such reforms help small cross-border traders, often women, enter the formal sector, make international trade procedures more transparent and accountable, promote good governance, generate better quality employment, strengthen information technology capabilities and generally modernize societies by bringing about benefits related to administrative efficiency. These reforms are a prerequisite for developing countries to join global value chains and start trading out of poverty.

463. **Objectives and features.** The Trade Facilitation Programme of UNCTAD aims at enhancing trade facilitation processes and the competitiveness of developing countries, including LDCs, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Its

goal is to ensure an increased implementation of trade facilitation reforms by developing countries, improving their capacity to comply with international and regional rules and standards relating to trade facilitation, including World Trade Organization commitments.

464. To facilitate the implementation of the technical and institutional obligations resulting from the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement and regional and subregional agreements in this field, UNCTAD assists developing countries, including LDCs, with a range of activities, as follows: elaboration of needs assessments and national and regional trade facilitation implementation plans; assistance with the ratification, categorization and notification of national implementation obligations; development of project plans; advisory services and capacity-building for national countries and their trade facilitation committees; monitoring and evaluation of trade facilitation implementation; assistance to roll out transparency tools; general capacity-building and technical assistance on trade facilitation reforms; as well as assistance with the implementation of trade facilitation measures at national and regional levels.

465. A main feature of UNCTAD technical and capacity-building in trade facilitation is to assist with the establishment and operationalization of national trade facilitation committees (NTFCs). The concept and benefits of such committees, that have an important coordination role in trade facilitation implementation, have been known and promoted by UNCTAD for many years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NTFCs have become important counterparts for UNCTAD and development partners to implement digital and paperless processes that facilitate trade while at the same time reducing the likelihood of contagion by transport workers and border officials.

466. Based on good practices of existing NTFCs, UNCTAD has developed a comprehensive capacity-building programme to assist countries to improve decision-making capacity and implementing skills of to fulfil their mandate to establish and operate such committees. UNCTAD provides an intensive professional programme for the secretariat and members of such committees, namely the Empowerment Programme for National Trade Facilitation Committees. The main objective is to help the committees to implement, in a coordinated manner, trade facilitation reforms, including the provisions of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, and to be able to monitor implementation.

467. In addition to the Empowerment Programme, UNCTAD provides support at the regional level, including to the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus and other regional organizations. As an example, UNCTAD is strategically advising the EAC Secretariat for several years on the best trade facilitation strategies at regional level and the harmonization of policies at the national level through national trade facilitation committees composed of public and private sectors involved in trade logistics. By the same token, UNCTAD has supported nine economies in the Pacific to enhance the transparency of its trade procedures within the regional Pacer Plus programme.

468. The Trade Facilitation Programme also assists developing countries in the implementation of specific trade facilitation measures. In 2020, for instance, UNCTAD helped with following: establishing a legal framework for trade-related single windows; undertaking simplification of trade-related procedures; training national transit coordinators; establishing national and regional trade information portals for cross-border trade procedures; establishing national monitoring tools for efficient trade facilitation implementation; supporting regional trade facilitation initiatives and supporting countries in implementing trade facilitation measures in response to COVID-19.

469. The success of the programme rests not least on its strong cooperation with other areas of work within UNCTAD, working on the crossroads of trade facilitation with customs automation, e-commerce, e-governance, transport, business facilitation and non-tariff measures, as well as with external partners such as United Nations regional commissions, United Nations country teams, the International Trade Centre, the World Trade Organization, the World Customs Organization and other international and regional organizations.

470. **Outputs.** UNCTAD technical assistance and capacity-building work in support of trade facilitation in 2020 was greatly impacted by COVID-19. In response to the global

pandemic and the resulting restrictions in organizing national training and capacity-building workshops, UNCTAD has developed a dedicated e-learning program for trade facilitation. The courses have during 2020 been further enhanced and developed from stand-alone videos, to include a combination of videos, accompanying webinars and tests with subsequent certification of participants. The e-learning is under continuous development and sessions have, so far, been developed in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. UNCTAD has in 2020 prepared and made available:

- (a) More than 2,200 e-learning pages in various languages,
- (b) More than 1,000 minutes of recorded class materials.

471. During 2020, UNCTAD has trained more than 500 trade facilitation stakeholders through its e-learning program; 42 per cent of those stakeholders were women. Participants have mainly been members of national trade facilitation committees; secretariat staff and other staff of relevant entities involved with trade facilitation and representing both public and private sectors. More than 20 e-learning sessions have been organized with multi-country participation in most sessions.

472. The e-learning courses of videos and webinars, focus on answering, in an interactive way, key questions such as:

- (a) What is trade facilitation and why is trade facilitation increasingly important?
- (b) What are the benefits of trade facilitation?
- (c) Can trade facilitation support a country's development policy?
- (d) What is the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), and how can we legally interpret each of the Provisions of the Agreement?
- (e) What other international standards and recommendations, apart from the TFA, are of interest to implement trade facilitation reforms?
- (f) What is the role of national trade facilitation committees?
- (g) Which trade facilitation indicators and indexes should a country take into consideration?
- (h) What is the relationship between technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures and trade facilitation?

473. UNCTAD has continued to provide national trade facilitation committees with tangible tools to ensure that the knowledge acquired in the course of the programme is maintained and transferred, thus contributing to the sustainability of the committees. Concretely, this is achieved by supporting countries to develop National Trade Facilitation Roadmaps, that will be used as multi-annual work plan for the NTFC to steer trade facilitation reforms, irrespectively of changes that might occur in the NTFC membership.

474. **Results and impacts:** The UNCTAD refocus during COVID-19 of moving to e-learning and thereby supporting NTFCs from developing and least developed countries during the COVID-19 has been highly appreciated according to testimonies from participants.

475. The Acting Director of Customs of the East African Community Secretariat noted "The online trade facilitation training was a great opportunity for the region to reinforce its capacity to address unprecedented demands due to COVID 19. I am optimistic that the training will greatly enhance the regional capacity on trade facilitation interventions and facilitate faster clearance of goods amid the coronavirus pandemic."

476. "The training has equipped me to handle several challenges. The knowledge obtained will help me solve trade facilitation issues at the national level, so the country recovers from the economic shrinkage experienced during this tragic time" one the participants from the United Republic of Tanzania said.

477. UNCTAD support for national trade facilitation committees brings also tangible policy results. In 2020, four countries supported by UNCTAD ratified the WTO Trade

Facilitation Agreement and 15 new notifications were sent to the WTO Trade Facilitation Committee by countries that had received UNCTAD technical assistance in the preparation of those notifications.

478. A total of 25 national trade facilitation committees received assistance from UNCTAD for their establishment or formalization during 2020. In the scope of the projects implemented, UNCTAD supported countries in the drafting of key trade facilitation policy documents. As such:

- (a) 34 national trade facilities coached;
- (b) 12 countries assisted to implement international standards;
- (c) 11 countries directly attributed improved trade facilitation collaboration after UNCTAD assistance;
- (d) 12 legal instruments drafted to support the establishment of national trade facilitation committees.

479. One of the main drivers of trade facilitation is transparency. In that regard, UNCTAD has largely contributed to it by building capacity and dialogue among the national trade facilitation committees with a public–private partnership but also through the trade information portals. Indeed, the trade information portal is an IT tool providing traders with the necessary information on trade procedures for export, import and transit operations. These projects are implemented in cooperation with UNCTAD Business Facilitation Unit. By implementing a trade information portal, the countries not only implement the article 1 of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, but also undertake an important step towards the actual simplification of trade procedures. In 2020, a total of eight Pacific islands and five countries in the East African Community have benefited from UNCTAD support to increase transparency in trade facilitation and developed online portals to display trade procedures.

480. During 2020, UNCTAD has launched one other valuable tool for national trade facilitation committees, namely the so-called Reform Tracker, which is an online monitoring tool for committees to monitor and collaborate regarding the implementation of national trade facilitation reforms and implementation of obligations of international and regional agreements. The tool provides an electronic collaboration platform for the members of the national committees with a view to being able to more efficiently collaborate in the implementation of trade facilitation procedures and monitor and report on these. During 2020, the tool has been piloted in 3 countries in the Eastern African region and will be rolled out in additional countries shortly.

C4 ASYCUDA – Automated System for Customs Data

Table C4
ASYCUDA – Automated System for Customs Data

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/9X/89S	Support for ASYCUDA implementation activities	1998–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/FAK	Support to the Centre of Excellence, Gibraltar	2017–	National Governments
INT/0T/GAE	Projet d’interconnexion des systèmes informatiques douaniers ALISA/PACIR de la CEDEAO	2018–	Economic Community of West African States

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/0T/GAK	Public Financial Management Improvement and Consolidation Project	2018–	European Union
INT/0T/HBV ^a	Enhancement of ASYCUDA World to facilitate Pre-Arrival Processing	2018–2020	Germany
INT/0T/HCP	Enhancement of the a CITES system	2019–	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
INT/0T/IBB	Enabling PaP and PdP of ocean cargo through digital B2B exchange between ASYCUDA-GIZ	2020–	Germany
INT/0T/IBL	Trade and customs data extraction tool for regular tariff and trade data notifications to WTO	2020–	World Trade Organization
RAF/0T/6BC	Establishment of SEATAC (ASYCUDA)	2006–	Norway
RAF/0T/IAA	COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme	2019–	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
RAF/0T/IAL	Development of extraction tool for trade-related data African Trade Observatory	2020–	International Trade Centre
RAF/0T/JAA	Implementation of customs inter connectivity on rail between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire	2020–	World Bank
RAS/0X/0DX	ASYCUDA implementation and support in the Asia-Pacific region	2000–	Multi-donor
RAS/0T/1DA	ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for the Pacific (ASMP)	2002–	Japan
RAS/0T/IAK	The Implementation of the Pacific Trade and Customs Harmonisation Project	2019–	Australia
RLA/0T/3AD	ASYCUDA Regional Support Centre for the Americas and Africa	2003–	National Governments
ROA-2023 (X12)	Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics	2020–	Development Account
AFG/0T/BBD	Implementation of ASYCUDA in the Afghan Customs Department (Phase 2: Rollout and Enhancement)	2012–2020	Afghanistan through World Bank
AFG/0T/HBU	Afghanistan Fiscal Performance Improvement Support Project (FSP)	2018–	Afghanistan

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/CBO	ASYCUDA World Implementation in Angola	2013–	Angola
ANT/0T/EBK ^a	ASYCUDA World (Antigua and Barbuda)	2015– 2020	Antigua and Barbuda
ARG/0T/FBA	Fortalecimiento de la Capacidad de Gestión de la Deuda Pública de la Provincia de Río Negro, Argentina	2017–	Argentina
ARU/0T/GAW	ASYCUDA World Consolidation – Aruba	2017–	Aruba
BAR/0T/CAA	ASYCUDA World Implementation in Barbados	2013–	Barbados
BDI/0T/TIAJ	Amélioration de SYDONIA World et mise en œuvre du guichet unique	2019–	Burundi
BGD/0T/FAC	ASYCUDA World – ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for Asia	2016–	Bangladesh
BKF/0T/EBM	Formation transit SYDONIA	2016–	African Development Bank
BKF/0T/HAM	Projet d’Interconnexion des systèmes informatiques douaniers – Burkina Faso	2018–	Burkina Faso
BKF/0T/HA V	Ouverture de SYDONIA World sur Internet	2018–	Burkina Faso
CMB/0T/IAI	ASYCUDA support mechanism for the Asia Region (ASMA)	2019–	Cambodia
CMB/0T/ICG	Migration to the latest available SuiteWorld release and Development and Implementation of an enhanced Risk management feature	2020–	Germany
COI/0T/HCN	Set up of an electronic Single Windows and improvement of ASYCUDA World	2019–	European Union – COMESA
CUR/0T/FAY	Strengthening Customs Management capacity of Curaçao	2016–	Curaçao
DJI/0T/HBX	Projet d’Appui à la Modernisation de l’Administration Publique – Djibouti	2019–	World Bank
DRC/0T/DBZ	Mise en œuvre des Mesures de Performance	2014–	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRC/0T/HCF	Introduction des pratiques modernes de gestion des sites douaniers	2019–	Trade Mark East Africa
ELS/0T/IBW	Projet SYDONIA – El Salvador	2020–	El Salvador
EQG/0T/EAM	Mise en place du SYDONI World à la Direction Générale des Douanes (DGD)	2016–	Equatorial Guinea

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
FIJ/0T/CBF	Computerisation of Customs Procedures and Data and Deployment of ASYCUDA World	2013–	Fiji
GAB/0T/DAH	Mise en œuvre de SYDONIA World	2018–	Gabon
GAM/0T/HAJ	Implementation of ASYCUDA World in Gambia	2019–	Switzerland
GUI/0T/BCX	Implementation de SYDONIA World	2013–	Guinea
GUY/0T/GAI	ASYCUDA World Implementation in the Cooperative	2017–	Guyana
HAI/0T/DAO	Consolidation of ASYCUDA World and Simplification of Customs Procedures and Operations in Haiti	2014–	Haiti
IVC/0T/4BV	Mise en place de SYDONIAWORLD a la Direction Générale des Douanes	2005–	Côte d’Ivoire
IVC/0T/HAD ^a	Interconnexion des systèmes douaniers entre la Côte d’Ivoire et le Burkina Faso	2018– 2020	World Bank
JAM/0T/GAS	Electronic Single Window for Trade	2017–	Jamaica
KAZ/0T/IAR	Provision of Services on Technical Support and Modernization IS ASTANA-1 KAZAKHSTAN	2020–	Kazakhstan
KAZ/0T/IBU	Support and Development of ASTANA-1 Information System of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2020	2020–	Kazakhstan
LAO/0T/HBP	Establishment and maintenance of the ASMA	2019–	Lao People’s Democratic Republic
LEB/0T/5BK	Implementation of ASYCUDA World in Lebanon	2005–	Lebanon
LES/0T/HBF	Technical Consulting Services Agreement (Vanuatu ESWS)	2019–	Lesotho
MAG/0T/EAC	Mise en œuvre de SYDONIA World	2016–	Madagascar
MAU/0T/CAD	Projet de Modernisation des Douanes de la République Islamique de Mauritanie	2013–	Mauritania
MDV/0T/HBK	ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for the Asia Region (ASMA)	2018–	Trade Mark East Africa
MLI/0T/9BF	ASYCUDA World Technical Assistance and Support	2009–	Mali
MOL/0T/IAF ^a	Moldova – Upgrade of Operational Asycuda World System of the Customs Service	2019– 2020	Republic of Moldova

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
NCA/0T/HBZ	Impèlementation de SYDONIA World en Nouvelle Calédonie	2020–	New Caledonia
NEP/0T/GAU	ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for Asia	2017–	United Nations Office for Project Services
NER/0T/GAO	Technical assistance project for the second phase of the implementation of ASYCUDA World	2017–	Niger
PNG/0T/DAX	Computerization of Customs Procedures and Data and Deployment of ASYCUDA World	2014–	Papua New Guinea
RWA/0T/HBE	Rwanda Electronic Single Window – TMEA	2018–	Trade Mark East Africa
SEY/0T/BBO	ASYCUDA project	2011–	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
SIL/0T/GAH	Public Financial Management Improvement and Consolidation Project	2017–	Sierra Leone
SRL/0T/DBT	ASYCUDA Support Mechanism for Asia	2014–	Sri Lanka
SRL/0T/IAD	Implementation of an Electronic CITES Certification System	2019–	Department of Wildlife Conservation
SUD/0T/8BG	ASYCUDA project	2008–	Sudan
SUR/0T/BAE	ASYCUDA World Implementation in the Republic of Suriname	2012–	Suriname
SWA/0T/HBB	Reinforcing analysis of risk profiling and installation and implementation of ASYPM 2018	2014–	Eswatini
SYP/0T/4BP	Implementation of ASYCUDA World in the Syrian Customs Directorate	2004–	Syrian Arab Republic
TIM/0T/HCR	Implementation of the Trade Single Window System for Timor-Leste (TL-TSWS)	2020–	Timor-Leste
TOG/0T/EAS	Migration vers SYDONIA World et formation	2016–	African Development Bank
TOG/0T/FBE	ASYCUDA Training	2017–	Togo
TRI/0T/BDD	Strengthening customs management capacity (ASYCUDA World consolidation)	2012–	Trinidad and Tobago

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
TUK/OT/FBF	Implementation of the Integrated Custom Information System in the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan	2017–	Turkmenistan
UGA/OT/HCH	Uganda Electronic Single Window – Phase II	2019–	Trade Mark East Africa
VAN/OT/HBJ	Technical Consulting Services Agreement (Vanuatu ESWS)	2019–	Vanuatu
ZIM/OT/7AC	Implementation of ASYCUDA World in Zimbabwe	2007–	Zimbabwe

^a Operationally but not financially completed or fully completed in 2020.

481. **Development context.** The ASYCUDA programme is directed at reforming, streamlining and automating the customs clearance process, increasing trade facilitation and strengthening the institution in member States and the capacities of its personnel. An efficient and effective customs administration is essential to the welfare of any country as it benefits the national economy by collecting revenue, assists the Government in implementing national and international trade policy, protects the country by combating fraud and the illegal trafficking of prohibited and restricted goods, provides statistical information on foreign trade transactions essential for economic planning and supports international trade needs.

482. The ASYCUDA programme is committed to providing sustained support for development, both in-country and remotely. Over a period of 40 years, it has supported the changing and evolving needs, addressed challenges of the customs administrations of 127 countries and territories, and facilitated their international trade. Having originated as a means to help countries build and utilize the data collected at customs ports of entry through databases, the programme's scope has gradually widened to helping countries manage their economic and financial analysis and planning, as well as assisting the private sector in doing business and including partner governmental agencies in the automation and streamlining of their procedures. It has also expanded in terms of the customs management functions that it supports, from the initial data capture (now uploaded via the Internet) to assisting countries and territories in monitoring trade crossing inwards and outwards of their borders, interfacing customs with partner governmental agencies for exchange of information, making available trade statistics, measuring institutional and trade facilitation benchmarks, and producing data critical to risk management analysis and enhancing the operational performance of customs and its integrity as an institution.

483. As an outcome of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the mandate of the ASYCUDA programme is reflected in paragraph 38 of the Nairobi Maafikiano, as it was in the Accra Accord (paragraph 167). The document states that UNCTAD should “continue to provide assistance to developing countries to design and implement policies and actions aimed at improving the efficiency of trade transactions as well as the management of transport operations. It should also continue to cooperate with member States in implementing the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA)”. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, in document A/C.5/64/L.23, also refers to the programme when it encourages the Secretary-General of UNCTAD “in supporting the strengthening of regional economic integration in Africa by providing, within the allocation to the Conference, technical assistance and capacity-building in the areas of trade, customs and infrastructure” (paragraph 82). In the Doha Mandate, specific reference is made to the programme's work, reaffirming, inter alia, the importance and role of the ASYCUDA programme in supporting developing countries, particularly landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and in continuing its trade facilitation work. The mandate states that UNCTAD should “assist developing countries, particularly landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries, and some countries with economies in transition, to address challenges affecting

their participation in trade from geographical constraints, with a view to improving transport systems and connections, designing and implementing resilient and sustainable transport systems, and enhancing transit infrastructure and trade facilitation solutions”, “continue its work in the field of trade facilitation, including the Automated System for Customs Data programme” and “advise small island developing States on the design and implementation of policies addressing their specific trade and trade logistics challenges linked to their remoteness and geographical isolation” (paragraphs 56 (h), (i) and (j)). General Assembly resolution 70/1 recognizes “that baseline data for several targets remains unavailable,” and calls “for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist” (paragraph 57). The resolution also makes reference to the need to “support developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data” (paragraph 76). In relation to General Assembly resolution 70/1, it is worthy to note the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data Software Suite is being implemented in 41 African countries and territories, 38 least developed countries, 34 small island developing States and 21 landlocked developing countries, which makes it a unique possibility as a base repository for the extraction of trade and customs related data to strengthen statistical capacity and to support trade policymakers.

484. The use of the ASYCUDA system by customs administrations contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as explained below:

(a) Goal 1. No poverty: customs’ contribution to national revenue through revenue collections, and the subsequent investment of revenues into national development programmes;

(b) Goal 2. Improving the food security and food safety through strengthening Customs and inter-agency controls at the borders, automation of issuance and monitoring of use of phytosanitary and veterinary certificates, integrated quota monitoring for agricultural exports and imports;

(c) Goal 3. Ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being, in particular targets 3a and 3d, by automating customs control of movement of excisable goods/tobacco products with ASYCUDA-DCTS and by strengthening of customs and inter-agency controls at the borders of pharmaceutical products, drugs precursors, introduction of electronic certificates for pharmaceutical goods and their efficient control in the single window environment;

(d) Goal 6. Clean water and sanitation, in particular target 6.3, by improving water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, as customs apply in their controls the international Conventions of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm;

(e) Goal 8. Decent work and economic growth: customs make a key contribution to facilitating trade, enabling access to global value chains, innovation and employment opportunities;

(f) Goal 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure, in particular targets 9.1, 9.3 and 9.c: the use of ASYCUDA by customs, which has always combined state-of-the-art advanced technologies with proven in-the-field expertise, ensures an efficient and tailored support to countries thus contributing to their ICT infrastructure development and upgrade, including the simplification of customs processes, sustainable modernization and automation initiatives promoting early taking of ownership by governments which contribute towards lowering the international market’s barriers to entry for SME/SMIs, especially in the least developed countries and Africa, and by improving regional and cross-border infrastructure;

(g) Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, in particular targets 11.2, 11.5, 11.b: technical assistance in the area of customs promotes the development of customs and trade infrastructure (ports, logistics terminals, warehouses, supply chains in cities), while the use of ASYREC in disaster-

prone countries reduces the loss of lives through implementation of integrated policies and plans increasing resilience to disasters;

(h) Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns: customs make a key contribution through more efficient customs and inter-agency controls over chemicals export and import;

(i) Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts: customs administrations using ASYCUDA can improve control for ozone depleting substances. One of the main objectives of implementing ASYCUDA is to reduce the use of paper in government agencies until disappearance;

(j) Goal 15. Life on land, in particular targets 15.5, 15.7 and 15.c: customs contribute to protecting society from unwanted pests and preventing the flow of illicit wildlife products by applying health and agricultural policies, and the International Plant Protection Convention; customs also help to take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products by applying the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Indeed, in 2019, ASYCUDA developed in cooperation with CITES an automated solution for endangered species import/export permit application, processing, issuance and reporting;

(k) Goal 17. Partnerships for the Goals, in particular targets 17.1, 17.6, 17.8, 17.9, and 17.18, through the use of ASYCUDA system: customs contribute, by applying international standards and trade-related agreements, and by collaborating with other national authorities, countries and international agencies such as the World Customs Organization, to increased efficiency and coordination, strengthened resource mobilization and trade facilitation and statistics, which in turn contributes to ensuring sustainable development. In addition, the ASYCUDA programme organizes a multitude of study tours and technical and functional training sessions for customs delegations to visit and learn from experiences of implementing a new technology and/or a new infrastructure in other parts of the world, directly contributing to North–South and South–South international and regional cooperation, ensuring capacity-building and transfer of know-how.

485. **Objectives and features.** The main objective of the ASYCUDA programme is the modernization of customs and of partner governmental agencies for trade facilitation, using information technology to speed up and simplify the goods clearance process. The ASYCUDA system manages the entire customs clearance process, from (and prior to) the arrival of goods up to their warehousing and ultimate release, after payment of duties and taxes. It includes an advanced risk-management and selectivity function and strong anti-corruption features. The implementation of an ASYCUDA project in a beneficiary country is based on the delivery of a comprehensive capacity-building programme, designed to transfer the full ASYCUDA functional and technical know-how to national staff and to ensure that the national team will be able to administer and maintain the national ASYCUDA system without external technical assistance and support.

486. **Outputs and results.** In addition to supporting the efforts in minimizing the impact of the pandemic, ASYCUDA experts in the field and in the headquarters mobilized their efforts to provide the necessary assistance to Governments and customs administrations in the implementation of ASYCUDA systems and modules and the development of new standalone tools. Countries such as Cambodia, Georgia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Republic of Moldova and Turkmenistan upgraded their ASYCUDA systems to its latest version. The Gambia and New Caledonia, through remote assistance of ASYCUDA experts and teleworking, started the implementation of ASYCUDA World in 2020 with the development and installation of prototype and additional modules as requested by customs authorities. Other countries such as Aruba, Barbados and Kazakhstan enhanced their use of the system by implementing additional features and modules. Within the framework of Single Window system implementation projects, Comoros, Jamaica, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu carried out activities for the development, design and launch of modules for the automation and streamlining of partner governmental agencies' procedures. Development-wise, the ASYCUDA programme took advantage of the travel restrictions to

further develop and improve its systems and tools such as the Dynamic Selectivity for risk management, the integration into ASYCUDA World of the express couriers clearance module and an enhanced version of the IATA Cargo-XML for the electronic processing of air cargo information, the development of an enhanced version of ASYPM (Automated System for Performance Measurement) and the development of trade data extraction tools.

487. The ASYCUDA programme continued to allow for increased revenue collection by customs, shorter clearance time and lower trade costs and simplified customs clearance process in the least developed countries and other user countries and territories. In Aruba, ASYCUDA implemented an online facility for the electronic payment of duties, taxes and other charges on international trade. In 2020, 99.8 per cent of payments of duties and taxes were made online. In Barbados during the first quarter of 2020, 60 per cent of commercial imports were cleared within 24 hours after payment of duties. In Comoros, within the context of the implementation of an ASYCUDA-based Single Window system for trade, the National Research Institute on Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment, which delivers, manages and controls import/export authorizations of animals, plants and agricultural products, increased its tax collection efficiency by 125 per cent in 2019–2020. In Jamaica, within the context of the implementation of the Jamaica Single Window for Trade, predictable and consistent service delivery greatly reduced application processing times to an average of 28 hours and overall clearance times to an average of 32 hours, with considerable savings in associated costs. In Lebanon, over 350 containers were processed through ASYCUDA system the day after the 2020 blast. In Nepal, over 3,000 declarations are processed every day on average through ASYCUDA system. Sri Lanka piloted the eCITES system developed jointly by ASYCUDA and CITES. In 2020, over 650 import/export permits were issued for international trade of endangered species on eCITES. The Vanuatu Electronic Single Window National Project Team and ASYCUDA implemented the bespoke ASYCUDA Sanitary and Phytosanitary Module (ASYSPS) to automate the processes of applying, approving and paying for SPS certificates. In 2020, over 350 SPS export certificates and 2,000 import permits were issued, over US\$250,000 were collected and 114 biosecurity officers and stakeholders were trained (53 per cent women). The average time for the application process went from days to as little as 10 minutes.

488. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, distance training and e-learning have become the cornerstone of capacity-building. ASYCUDA programme organized and delivered virtual sessions where the trainer and the trainees interact through their desktops and laptops using technology like in New Caledonia. The ASYCUDA has also been mobilizing its efforts in offering quality training materials to its systems' users around the world by implementing a platform for e-learning and availing training documentation and videos. However, countries with on-site trainer benefited from training in 2020, but complying with sanitary restrictions. The number of participants was reduced by half. Training rooms were larger in size to respect social distancing. All participants wore masks and were handed hydroalcoholic solutions for frequent hands and material disinfection. In some countries such as Gabon, participants' temperature was measured before entering the room. In Barbados, five training sessions were executed to a total of 122 participants in 2020.

C5 Statistics

Table C5
Statistics

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/0T/IBJ	European Union-Implementation of the action Better Statistics for Gender responsive Trade Policy	2020-	European Union
INT/0T/IBK	Development of a transport cost database for international trade, with a special focus on international shipping	2020-	World Bank
RAF/0T/BCR	Projet UEMOA-CNUCED pour la mise en place des statistiques du commerce international des services	2014-	West African Economic and Monetary Union
ROA-1617 (AL10)	Developing indicator on illicit financial flows and monitoring them in Latin America	2017-	Development Account
ROA-1819 (Y11)	Defining, estimating and disseminating statistics on illicit financial flows in Africa	2018-	Development Account
ROA-2023 (D12)	Data and statistics for more gender-responsive trade policies in Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia	2020-	Development Account

489. **Development context.** Harnessing the power of data and statistics is a necessary condition to fully implement and monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. This is true for all areas of sustainable development, and particularly for the areas that are most dynamic and where significant changes can be observed in relatively short periods of time, such as trade and its gender impacts, investment and financial issues. Countries require accurate, timely and relevant statistics that could allow monitoring of trends in these areas and studying the impact of economic policies on inclusive development. UNCTAD is continuously taking actions to assist developing countries that have decided to improve their statistical capacity in the area of trade, investment, finance, gender in trade and sustainable development.

490. Illicit financial flows (IFFs) raise serious problems for financing development since they constitute a drain on capital and tax revenues. They compromise sustainable development by diverting resources from social spending and productive investment and by impeding structural transformation. They may also weaken institutions and the rule of law. These risks have been recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where the reduction of IFFs is listed in Sustainable Development Goal target 16.4. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also highlights IFFs as a threat to the mobilization of resources for development and calls for a redoubling of efforts to substantially reduce IFFs.

491. As a driver of economic development, trade can contribute to more equal economic empowerment of women and men or exaggerate existing inequalities and create new ones. Member States are committed to advancing equal and inclusive trade, but lack of data threatens to become an impediment to developing gender-responsive and inclusive trade policies. There are multiple channels of interaction between gender and trade, and effects that are country or industry specific. Having reliable and comparable statistics on gender and trade is a prerequisite for action and reviewing progress towards inclusive trade policy and equitable economic development as part of the 2030 Agenda.

492. **Objectives.** The objective of this product is to enhance the capacity of policymakers and other stakeholders to monitor and report progress along the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on trade and development and the interrelated issues of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. Specifically, the project with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) has the objective of improving the statistical capacity of member States of the WAEMU to establish a harmonized mechanism of data collection, treatment and dissemination of statistics related to the imports and exports of services. The e-learning and other training activities aim at building national capacities to collect, harmonize, analyse and disseminate statistics related to international trade of goods and services. UNCTAD, as a co-custodian of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.4.1, also developed concept and methodologies to measure IFFs with the objective of strengthening national statistical capacities to define, measure and disseminate statistics on tax- and commercial-related IFFs. The outcomes of the IFF-related projects would enhance the data infrastructure required to measure Sustainable Development Goal 16 and support evidence-based policy recommendations in this area. In a joint United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on gender-in-trade, with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), UNCTAD is developing a coherent approach and member States' statistical capacity to measure the interplay between gender equality and trade policy with official statistics. The methodology for doing so is being developed in a joint project with the European Commission Directorate General on Trade.

493. **Outputs.** The WAEMU-UNCTAD project started in 2014 and its activities continued throughout 2020. During 2020, UNCTAD Development Statistics and Information Branch (DSIB) have been working on the final phase of the project – the detailed specification, design and build of the IT system. This work progressed well, and it is expected that the completed system will be rolled out to countries in the second half of 2021. Related to this project, a new global transport costs database was built and launched in 2020, in cooperation with the World Bank – this will contribute directly to the estimation of freight costs – which UNCTAD is working on in cooperation with the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

494. Finally, as this project is approaching its end, an evaluation of the project was also undertaken by an independent evaluator and the draft evaluation report was submitted to UNCTAD and WAEMU in 2020. The project evaluation recognized the good management of the project and was accepted by both parties without amendment.

495. The training activities on trade statistics were developed by UNCTAD, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division and the World Trade Organization and delivered as part of the Train for Trade Programme. Two global courses were offered in 2020. The participants of all courses involve statisticians from national statistical institutes, customs offices and different ministries that participate in the collection, analysis and dissemination of international trade statistics. Over the past 3 years, over 3,500 participants have received online training in either merchandise or services trade statistics.

496. In addition to the continuing tenth tranche of the UNDA project on measuring IFFs in Latin America, UNCTAD in collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNECA and ESCAP continued its work on the 11th and 12th tranches of UNDA projects to estimate IFFs with a focus on African and Asian countries. In October 2020, UNODC and UNCTAD published a “Conceptual framework for the statistical measurement of illicit financial flows” reflecting concepts and methods adopted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in 2019. This conceptual framework now sets the definitions and standards for the statistical measurement of IFFs. In spring 2021, UNCTAD will publish companion methodological guidelines to help countries pilot this work. In February 2021, the report of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (FACTI) for Achieving the 2030 Agenda noted this important development.

497. UNCTAD held an online workshop under the UNDA project on gender-in-trade in November 2020 to launch work in the ECE region. The event built on a desk study of gender-in-trade challenges in the ECA and ECE regions and shared the conceptual framework for the measurement of gender-in-trade for discussion.

498. In June 2020, UNCTAD published a policy brief entitled “Making trade agreements work for gender equality – data and statistics” to guide member States in this work. First pilot countries have started to test the compilation of gender-in-trade indicators using methodology developed in the project with the European Commission.

499. **Results.** The UNCTAD-WAEMU project achieved significant results in 2020, including the validation of the second round of surveys which incorporated several methodological improvements. The development of an IT statistical system, and the transport costs database were also significant milestones in this work.

500. In relation to the training activities in statistics (part of the Train for Trade Programme), the training programme on international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS) had 1,247 participants (48 per cent women) from 149 countries. The other training courses on statistics on international trade in services (SITS) had 987 participants (42 per cent women) from 153 countries. In total, 2,234 participants from 173 countries benefited from statistical e-learning courses.

501. Finally, the UNDA projects on measuring IFFs had made significant progress over the past two years. As noted above, the conceptual framework was adopted by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in 2019 and published in 2020. The inter-agency task force, chaired by UNCTAD, also made considerable progress on developing the methodological guidelines.

C7 Enabling accounting and reporting on the private sector’s contribution to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Table C7

Enabling accounting and reporting on the private sector’s contribution to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
B99-1819 (H11)	Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal reporting in Africa and Latin America	2018–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (W12)	Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector	2020–	Development Account

502. **Development context.** A high-quality corporate reporting environment is a critical facilitator for attracting investment, allocating scarce resources in an efficient manner, and promoting financial inclusion and stability. In the past decades, there has been a clear trend towards the adoption of harmonized standards and codes by UNCTAD member States. Furthermore, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development significantly increased and enhanced the role of enterprise reporting as a primary source of information on the private sector contribution to the attainments of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, effective implementation of such standards and codes remains a challenge for many developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Elements that have an impact on the corporate reporting environment include weaknesses in legal and regulatory frameworks, lack of human capacity and relevant support institutions, or obstacles to the adequate monitoring and enforcement of international standards and codes. As such, there is a need for coherent efforts to support capacity-building in the area of corporate reporting, with a view to enabling progress towards the convergence of national corporate reporting environments with global standards and codes. In particular, member States require tools that enable the identification of gaps through international benchmarking, the elaboration of action plans for accounting reform, and the measurement of progress in priority areas.

503. **Objectives and features.** The Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) was established with the

mandate to assist member States of the United Nations in harmonizing their accounting practices with international standards to improve good governance and transparency, facilitate international investment and strengthen financial stability. ISAR conducts its activities with the support of the UNCTAD secretariat. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, ISAR focuses on harmonization of companies reporting on their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal implementation. The Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts achieves this by building an intergovernmental consensus towards convergence of corporate reporting and in particular on sustainability reporting frameworks; facilitating international coordination and cooperation with the key players in this area; identifying and sharing good practices; developing practical guidance and capacity-building tools and providing technical assistance on issues related to both financial and sustainability reporting. This work is conducted through the annual sessions of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts, as well as associated workshops and round tables, research activities and technical assistance, such as the Accounting Development Tool (ADT).

504. The ADT enables beneficiary countries to voluntarily assess their accounting infrastructure, including their national institutions, regulations, human resources and processes, against international requirements for high-quality corporate reporting. The Tool promotes an open and constructive dialogue among all stakeholders involved, which is required for conducting successful accounting reforms. It provides a quantitative benchmark of a country's position at a particular point in time and, when implemented more than once, allows countries to assess their progress towards achieving international best practice. The results of the Accounting Development Tool support the elaboration of national action plans and the identification of priority areas where further action is required in order to improve their corporate reporting environment.

505. **Outputs.** The thirty-seventh session of ISAR was held virtually from 2 to 6 November 2020. Distinguished speakers representing major international players in the area of corporate accounting and reporting, public and private sector bodies, the accounting profession, investors, academia and other stakeholders, discussed progress made and main challenges in improving quality and usefulness of sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies; trends and good practices in climate-related financial disclosures, as well as the impact of COVID-19.

506. In accordance with the agenda several case studies conducted by UNCTAD in the intersessional period, on the practical application of UNCTAD/ISAR Guidance on core indicators (GCI) for entity reporting on the contribution towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals were presented and discussed. The case studies provided further evidence of usefulness of the GCI approach on facilitation of a baseline sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies in a consistent and comparable manner and underscored the role of the GCI as a capacity-building tool for integrating sustainability information into companies' accounting and reporting cycle. In addition, the need for technical capacity-building was highlighted. To address this need, UNCTAD published a Training Manual on Core Sustainable Development Goal Indicators for Entity Reporting and developed Tutorials of the GCI Training Manual to be used for training purposes either in person or through distance learning.

507. Reflecting on the role of UNCTAD as a co-custodian of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator 12.6.1 "Number of companies publishing sustainability reports", under other business agenda item, experts reviewed progress and challenges in the Sustainable Development Goal data collection from companies on their contribution towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the session featured the ISAR Honours 2020, which acknowledged key national and international initiatives on promotion and harmonization of sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies, with a view to raising awareness and disseminating best practices in this area. The virtual ceremony was attended by more than 100 participants and viewed by more than 150 people on the United Nations Web TV. Thirty-seven public and private sector entities from 20 developing, developed and countries with economies in transition were considered for the honours. ISAR Honours recognized six honourees, three within the international category and three in the national.

508. Under the other business agenda item, Colombia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan and South Africa shared their experiences on strengthening their accounting and reporting infrastructure based on the UNCTAD Accounting Development Tool (ADT) with a focus on improvements in sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting with support of the GCI application.

509. Preceding the session, on 30 October 2020, ISAR technical webinar on Assurance on Sustainability Reports was jointly organized by UNCTAD and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. The workshop had 205 registrants from 26 countries. Discussions focused on current practices and challenges in this area.

510. On the side of the thirty-seventh session of ISAR, the secretariat organized a virtual meeting with representatives from beneficiary countries (Colombia, Guatemala, Kenya and South Africa) of the Development Account 11th Tranche Project Enabling policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal reporting in Africa and Latin America. The meeting provided an occasion to inform on the progress of implementation of national activities, share experiences, express their views and discuss common challenges faced in their efforts to strengthen policy frameworks for enterprise sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting. The meeting was organized in response to a request from beneficiary countries to use the ISAR session as an opportunity to share lessons learned throughout the project implementation within and across regions, and to facilitate a harmonized approach towards developing policy frameworks on sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies. The main objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of Governments to measure and monitor the private sector contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular on indicator 12.6.1, and encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

511. In 2020, within the scope of the Development Account project, UNCTAD continued to implement the ADT in Colombia and South Africa and initiated its implementation in Guatemala, which took into consideration new developments in the area of accounting and sustainability reporting, drawing on UNCTAD research into corporate reporting and the Sustainable Development Goals.

512. In Colombia, a National Action Plan towards developing high quality sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies was developed based on the gaps and priorities identified and agreed with the ADT. A meeting to present the National Action Plan, discuss the activities and recommendations proposed and develop consensus on the way forward took place virtually on 15 July 2020. This was followed by a capacity-building activity on core Sustainable Development Goal indicators which took place virtually in July 2020. It was based on the UNCTAD GCI and a newly developed Training Manual on its implementation. The capacity-building workshop was attended by 84 participants. Participants included stakeholders that participated in national activities in Colombia and representatives from companies and universities.

513. In Guatemala, an assessment of the national sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting infrastructure was conducted from July to October 2020. A national report on the assessment of sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting was prepared and validated at the national consultative workshop in October 2020. The workshop also included presentations and discussion on sustainability reporting, three GCI case studies and a note on the status of sustainability reporting in the country, which facilitated awareness creation on best practices, trends, and challenges in this area.

514. In South Africa, a progress meeting was held online in July 2020 and a national report of the ADT assessment was discussed at the National Consultative Workshop which took place virtually in November 2020. The discussions included presentations on sustainability reporting and the GCI. Guatemala and South Africa are now in the process of developing an action plan based on the ADT findings.

515. Moreover, in implementing activities, UNCTAD has continued fostering partnerships with key players in the sustainability reporting area, including with the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB),

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Professional Accountancy Organization Development Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation, and other international and regional stakeholders in the area of corporate and Sustainable Development Goal reporting. Additionally, UNCTAD has strengthened cooperation with other United Nations entities working in this area such as: UNDESA, UNEP, United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). As a result, UNDESA is using the GCI as business statistics' input for the national accounts and UNRISD is developing indicators for social and solidarity entities building on the core Sustainable Development Goal indicators, which highlights the relevance of sustainability reporting in measuring the contribution of the private sector to the Sustainable Development Goals. This cooperation has been critical for UNCTAD consensus-building efforts among stakeholders in the diverse corporate reporting community, towards facilitation of harmonization and comparability of sustainability/Sustainable Development Goal reporting by companies and raising awareness of the role of high-quality reporting in monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

516. During the year, UNCTAD participated in and contributed to the webinars with the European Commission, World Business Alliance, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, Global Compact, UNRISD, Professional Accountancy Organization Development Committee of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and other international and regional stakeholders in the area of corporate and Sustainable Development Goal reporting.

517. In cooperation with UNEP as co-custodian of indicator 12.6.1 together with UNCTAD, a methodology to measure the "Number of companies publishing sustainability reports" has been developed. This led to the reclassification of the indicator from Tier III to Tier II at the end of 2019. In 2020, UNCTAD started the process of data collection in cooperation with pilot countries, including Guatemala, Qatar, South Africa and Ukraine. The mechanism of data collection will be replicated in the other regions to aggregate the global statistics that will be reported to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in 2021.

518. **Results.** For more than 37 years, the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts has been providing member States with guidance and tools on a number of corporate reporting topics. These products have had a positive impact, assisting member States in implementing International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and other internationally recognized practices, such as guidelines on corporate governance disclosure, and environmental and corporate social responsibility reporting.

519. The thirty-seventh virtual session of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts had close to 400 delegates from more than 50 countries. The Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts is the largest expert meeting of UNCTAD and one of the longest standing groups of experts in the United Nations system. High attendance underscores its sustained relevance in shaping the international agenda in accounting and reporting, and its role in bringing the views of developing countries in the standard-setting process.

520. A survey shows that 98 per cent of participants found the session to be useful or very useful. Over 90 per cent of participants rated the session's organization, attendance and substance as satisfactory or very satisfactory. One hundred per cent of technical workshop participants rated the workshop as useful or very useful.

521. The Group of Experts reached agreed conclusions on all agenda items. Particularly, it underlined the essential role that sound sustainability reporting by entities plays in promoting sustainable investment and finance, and in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. It noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly heightened the focus on sustainability issues. It also stressed that the existence of diverse sustainability reporting frameworks and standards leads to inconsistent and incomplete information and that there is a need to address these challenges to improve the quality and reliability of sustainability data and reporting, with a view to improving corporate decision-making while strengthening investors' and other stakeholders' protection and information; promoting efficient and transparent markets, economies and societies; facilitating the

reduction of systemic risks; and improving corporate internal control systems and management practices.

522. At the same time, ISAR took note of recent trends towards convergence in enterprise accounting and reporting, including concerted efforts to overcome the fragmentation of sustainability reporting, and of the quest for standardization in this area and for an appropriate design of the governance aspects of a comprehensive global corporate reporting system. In this regard, it emphasized the need to foster further efforts and cooperation in all initiatives towards a single, coherent, and robust set of standards on sustainability reporting that would provide consistent and comparable data, facilitate the interconnectivity of integrated reporting and ensure an equal footing of financial and sustainability reporting. It also underlined that climate-related financial disclosures were critical to understand the possible exposure of companies' activities to the medium- and long-term effects of climate change, as well as their impacts on society, and to properly manage those impacts, risks and opportunities, including the efficient allocation of capital supporting a transition to a more sustainable, low-carbon economy.

523. In this regard, in its agreed conclusions the thirty-seventh session recognized the important role that the GCI has been playing to facilitate the convergence of sustainability reporting frameworks by providing early on an initial and simple common set of universal indicators for entities' baseline reporting on sustainability issues in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also noted the usefulness of capacity-building efforts provided by the UNCTAD secretariat to facilitate wider use of the GCI, raising awareness and dissemination thereof, including for small and medium-sized enterprises, and encouraged further activities in this area with a view to facilitating the further convergence and alignment of reporting frameworks and practices. Those include continue engaging with relevant United Nations agencies, as well as with key regional and international institutions, promoting work on the harmonization and comparability of sustainability accounting and reporting by entities in the public and private sectors, developing metrics and tools on measuring and collecting timely and reliable data on the private sector contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goal implementation. It also called upon UNCTAD to conduct further case studies and consultative meetings during the forthcoming intersessional period with a view to analysing the main findings of about 20 case studies prepared over the last two years and reflecting the feedback in the GCI implementation process. Further on, it requested UNCTAD to continue monitoring progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, as well as of the recommendations of other initiatives, with a view to facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices on this topic in future ISAR sessions.

524. ISAR also requested the UNCTAD to continue its efforts relating to the implementation of the Accounting Development Tool (ADT) and the GCI; and to continue monitoring developments in the standard-setting arena that have implications for the ADT and GCI, with a view to updating these tools at an appropriate juncture in the coming years, as needed. It also called to conduct further work required for the implementation of the metadata guidance and data collection mechanisms to support member States in reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 12.6.1.

C8 Investment and public health

Table C8
Investment and Public Health

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/0T/BAQ	Capacity-Building in Investment for Development	2011–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/DCA	Promoting Access to Knowledge and Education in Developing Countries	2014–	Germany
RAF/0T/HBT	AfCFTA support programme to eliminate non-tariff barriers, increase regulatory transparency and promote industrial diversification	2018–	Germany
ROA-2023 (F12)	Investment incentives for local production of essential antibiotics in East Africa	2020–	Development Account

525. **Development context.** Developing countries experience considerable difficulty in attracting sustainable investment in their health and pharmaceutical sector to meet the sustainable development goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being of all at all ages. The framework for investment in health involves many policy domains and institutions, including in health, investment, intellectual property and competition regulations, and relies on both public and private finance as well as international cooperation. Currently, the challenge of directing investment into health is intensified due to COVID-19, which also revealed the vulnerability of global supply chains. UNCTAD seeks to enhance the capacity of developing countries to develop a framework for investment in health, taking into account their respective development context and provides technical assistance to promote coherence in related policies, such as intellectual property (IP), innovation, competition and digitalization. The programme targets Sustainable Development Goal 3 (good health and well-being), Sustainable Development Goal 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) and Sustainable Development Goal 17 (policy and institutional coherence).

526. **Objectives and features.** The objectives of the programme are the following:

- (a) Development of domestic technological capacities and promotion of investment in health sector;
- (b) Promotion of coherence in industrial and health policies, including in the regulation of investment and intellectual property;
- (c) Promotion of stakeholder ownership to ensure the sustainability of programme activities.

527. **Outputs.** The programme provided policy advice and capacity-building in three areas:

- (a) Policy coherence for investment in health, including local production of pharmaceuticals;
- (b) Use of intellectual property rights for industrial development, regional economic integration and value chain development; facilitate collaborations between foreign and domestic enterprises, universities and private sector for technology and innovation; and
- (c) Promotion of investment and intellectual property policy to address the development impact of the digital economy.

528. In 2020, the work programme involved the implementation of three projects targeting investment in the production and supply of antibiotics in the context of measures

to combat antimicrobial resistance, supporting regional cooperation on IP rights in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the development of a database of case laws on intellectual property and public health.

529. In March 2020 UNCTAD launched a project funded under the United Nations Development Account on Investment incentives for local production of essential antibiotics in East Africa. Pharmaceutical producers in this region tend to focus on a limited range of antibiotics, while neglecting others that are as much needed. As a result, there is a high risk of resistance developing for products that are being overused, while the limited or undersupply of other products is equally a risk for the public health system, resulting in insufficient access by patients. The project aims at addressing the misalignment between incentives for the local production of antibiotics and the objective to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Although COVID-19 affected the beginning of the project, in 2020, UNCTAD has completed collecting empirical data for a situation analysis on local production, importation and supply of antibiotics, instances of shortage and prevalence of AMR and an assessment of the policy framework for investment in local production and supply of antibiotics in beneficiary countries, namely, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. UNCTAD also undertook a collection and assessment of regional policies at East African Community (EAC) level. A series of webinars was held with stakeholders in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and with EAC Secretariat, to assess the current situation and improve the understanding on AMR and supply of antibiotics. In 2021, UNCTAD expects the draft reports and recommendations to be submitted for validation by stakeholders and to begin the implementation of recommendations. The project lasts until 2023.

530. On 23 April 2020, UNCTAD and the World Health Organization (WHO) organized a webinar on investment in quality local production in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to address supply bottlenecks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The event, which was attended by 127 participants, emphasized the need to increase pandemic preparedness in developing countries through, inter alia, increased local pharmaceutical production.⁵² Based on the results of this workshop, in May 2020 UNCTAD published an exploratory paper on “Ten Actions to Boost Low and Middle-Income Countries’ Productive Capacity for Medicines”. It identified five challenges (lack of capital, technology and skills, low quality and standards, weak enabling policy frameworks, small markets and unstable demand and poor infrastructure) affecting LMICs. To overcome these challenges the exploratory paper identified ten actions to ensure LMICs’ equitable access to COVID-19-related products, focusing on technology partnerships between LMIC Governments, local pharmaceutical producers, foreign investors and development partners.⁵³

531. In 2020, UNCTAD developed a case law database on intellectual property and public health. This case law database consists of a systematic collection of the summaries of notable judgments adopted by national or regional judicial organs of the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The summaries have been developed with a view to supporting a better understanding of key intellectual property issues that relate to access to medicines.⁵⁴ The case law database is the product of UNCTAD work for over a decade on intellectual property and public health. It has been updated with the support of the South Centre. The case law database was launched on 16 December 2020 via a webinar organised jointly with the South Centre.

532. In promoting regional cooperation on intellectual property rights to enhance regional economic and value chain integration, UNCTAD undertook consultations with the African Union Commission, the UNECA and the European Union Intellectual Property Office which works as a development partner to the African Union. In addition to supporting the Secretariat of the African Union Commission, UNCTAD provided an overview of its work and a potential framework for regional cooperation during the virtual meeting of the AfCFTA Technical Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights held from 11 to

⁵² See further information at <https://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=2418>.

⁵³ See further information at <https://unctad.org/news/ten-actions-boost-low-and-middle-income-countries-productive-capacity-medicines>.

⁵⁴ UNCTAD, 2020, Case Law Database: Intellectual Property and public Health, available at <https://unctad.org/ippcaselaw/>.

13 November 2020. The work of UNCTAD on regional cooperation on intellectual property rights is conducted under the 2018–2021 BMZ⁵⁵-funded project on the AfCFTA support programme to eliminate non-tariff barriers, increase regulatory transparency and promote industrial diversification.

533. In April 2020, UNCTAD organized a webinar on “Who owns our data? What is the role of intellectual property?” as part of the UNCTAD E-commerce Week 2020. The control and sharing of data are becoming crucial due to its importance for innovation and productivity, including in food and agriculture, climate change and industrialization. The webinar hosted international experts on data and intellectual property rights to address the key bottlenecks for data sharing and the role of intellectual property rights. It contributed to increased awareness of webinar participants on the role of IP rights in promoting the sharing of data.⁵⁶

534. In 2020, UNCTAD and the International Trademarks Association (INTA) organized a webinar on the potential of distinctive signs to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development. Panellists shared the experience of ASEAN and Zimbabwe on potential contributions of distinctive signs for enterprises and overall economic development.

535. **Results and Impact.** With the launch of the project on Investment incentives for local production of essential antibiotics in East Africa, UNCTAD has become part of the international effort to address the investment gap to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The webinar consultations conducted with beneficiaries helped to increase awareness of the challenges of AMR and the role of local production of antibiotics. The fact-findings, interviews and data collection conducted in the beneficiary countries and the East African Community have already identified important gaps in AMR policies and their implementation. UNCTAD’s case law database on intellectual property and public health was recognised by users as instrumental in informing judges in developing countries on substantive questions of the interface between intellectual property protection and public health. UNCTAD’s contribution to the intellectual property rights chapter of the 2019 Assessing Regional Integration in Africa IX report, was endorsed as a good basis for a situation analysis and deliberation of the AfCFTA Technical Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights during its meeting held virtually on 11–13 November 2020. UNCTAD is further requested to support the work of the Technical Working Group.

C9 International investment agreements

Table C9

International Investment Agreements

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/0BG	Capacity-Building in Developing Countries in IIA	2000–	Multi-donors
INT/OT/BAQ	Capacity-Building in Investment for Development	2011–	Multi-donors
INT/OT/H CJ	Strategic Partnership the Netherlands	2018–	Netherlands

536. **Development context.** The current network of international investment rules is multi-layered and multifaceted. The past years saw dynamic changes to the regime of international investment agreements (IIAs), with intensified efforts at the regional level.

⁵⁵ BMZ is the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany.

⁵⁶ See further information at https://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/DTL_STICT_2020.11.05_eWeek2020finalsummaryreport_en.pdf.

At the same time, the number of bilateral investment treaty (BIT) terminations has been increasing.

537. Growing unease with the current functioning of the global IIA regime and the investor–State dispute settlement (ISDS) system, combined with the evolution of the international investment landscape, the greater role of Governments in the economy and the current sustainable development imperative led countries to reform their IIA regimes. Today, there is broad consensus that reform is not an option but a must.

538. The COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the need to reform the IIA regime. Some of the policy responses taken by Governments to address the economic fallout of the pandemic could be challenged by foreign investors through arbitration proceedings under IIAs (*World Investment Report 2020*). This highlights even more the need to safeguard sufficient regulatory space in IIAs to protect public health and to minimize the risk of investor–State dispute settlement proceedings. IIA negotiators and policymakers should therefore be familiar with key issues and concepts surrounding such agreements, thoroughly understand legal obligations under IIAs as well as issues arising in practice during their implementation and use available tools to review the sustainable development dimension of IIAs.

539. Integrating sustainable development objectives into IIAs requires addressing a number of questions, including how to safeguard the right to regulate while preserving protection; how to enhance legal clarity of certain provisions; how to reform dispute settlement; how to promote and facilitate investment; how to ensure responsible investment; and how to manage the systemic complexity of the IIA regime. As such policy changes are taking hold in new treaties, the large stock of old-generation treaties is lagging behind and becoming an increasing source of friction in the process of modernization of the investment regime.

540. **Objectives and features.** The UNCTAD work programme on IIAs responds to this trend of reform, aiming to make the IIA regime work better for both States and investors, and more conducive to sustainable development. The programme covers activities in the three pillars of UNCTAD (research and policy analysis, technical assistance and advisory services, and intergovernmental consensus-building). The IIA work programme is guided by the Accra Accord, which established UNCTAD as the key focal point in the United Nations system for dealing with matters related to IIAs (paragraph 151), the Doha Mandate, which ratified it (para. 65 (k)) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which calls on UNCTAD to continue its existing programme of meetings and consultations with member States on investment agreements (para. 91). In addition, the Nairobi Maafikiano reiterates the call for UNCTAD to continue its existing programme (para. 38 (l)) and to continue promoting a better understanding of issues related to IIA and their development dimension (para. 55 (hh)).

541. **Outputs.** For 2020, the main outputs are outlined below.

Research work related to technical assistance

542. In addition to regular reporting and monitoring on international investment policy developments, the IIA work programme carried out research and policy analysis, among others, for the following publications:

(a) *World Investment Report 2020*. The *World Investment Report 2020* (WIR 2020) was launched on 16 June 2020. Its Chapter on recent policy developments and key issues notes that the pandemic will slow down the pace of treaty-making. The pandemic and its mitigation measures are also likely to result in a reassessment by countries of the role of IIAs in national development. Indeed, IIAs can come into play in relation to the policy responses undertaken by governments to address the economic fallout of the pandemic as these measures also affect the operations of foreign investors. The chapter provides an update on developments on investor–State dispute settlement and discusses trends in investment policymaking. It also takes stock of IIA and ISDS reform actions, which have been undertaken at all levels (national, bilateral, regional and multilateral). The report also notes that progress on the reform of the IIA regime is visible in treaties concluded in 2019. Nearly all new IIAs contain features in line with the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development and the Reform Package for

the International Investment Regime, with the preservation of States' regulatory space being the most frequent area of reform. Since 2012, over 75 countries and regional economic integration organizations benefited from UNCTAD support for the development of new model BITs and IIA reviews.

(b) IIA Reform Accelerator. The IIA Reform Accelerator was launched on 12 November 2020 with the aim to expedite the modernization of the existing stock of 2,500 old-generation IIAs in force today. The Accelerator responds to the need for change of substantive aspects of the IIA regime by focusing on a selection of reform-oriented formulations for eight key IIA clauses (including fair and equitable treatment, and indirect expropriation provisions). The IIA Reform Accelerator identifies ready-to-use model language, accompanied by recent IIA and model BIT examples. Building on the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework, the IIA Reform Accelerator provides a tool for coordination, focused discussion and consensus-building on joint reform actions between multiple countries. The importance of reforming the stock of old-generation treaties becomes particularly apparent in times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic the world is facing today.

(c) IIA issues notes. The following issues notes were produced:

(i) "The Changing IIA Landscape: New Treaties and Recent Policy Developments", 1 July 2020. This IIA Issues Note reviews the changing IIA landscape and sheds light on new treaties signed in 2019 and recent policy developments. The Issues Note also discusses how policy responses taken by governments to address the COVID-19 pandemic could create friction with existing IIA obligations.

(ii) "Investor-State Dispute Settlement Cases Pass the 1,000 Mark: Cases and Outcomes in 2019", 8 July 2020. This IIA Issues Note provides an overview of known treaty-based investor-State dispute settlement cases initiated in the past year and overall ISDS case outcomes.

Capacity-building

543. Based on the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development and its Reform Package for the International Investment Regime as well as UNCTAD IIA Reform Accelerator options for modernizing the existing stock of treaties, UNCTAD carries out a range of training activities and advisory services. During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented.

Advisory services

544. They include reviews of a country's or region's IIA network; comments on country's or region's model treaties; and other analysis of various aspects of countries' IIA universes, including with respect to the interplay between IIA obligations and measures taken to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Comments are provided with a view to identifying options for maximizing IIAs' sustainable development dimension. The analysis is tailor-made, considering the specificities of each country and/or region and, typically, the submission of written advisory services is complemented by one or several videoconferences, discussing the analysis undertaken on behalf of the country.

545. In response to requests from member States, UNCTAD provided IIA reviews for Kyrgyzstan (February 2020), Angola (October 2020) and Kazakhstan (October 2020). Also, UNCTAD provided comments on the model treaties of Egypt (September 2020) and Morocco (January 2020) at their request.

546. Support was also given to the African Union, UNECA and other stakeholders with the draft of the Investment Protocol of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Among others, UNCTAD contributed to an Expert Meeting organized by the African Union on the African Investment Protocol on 18 June 2020 (webinar) as well as a series of discussions organized by the African Union on COVID-19 and the risk of ISDS cases in Africa which ultimately resulted in the adoption of a declaration on COVID-19 and ISDS in Africa.

Regional or other training courses hosted or co-hosted by UNCTAD in 2020 include the following:

(a) Joint UNCTAD–League of Arab States–Islamic Development Bank “High-Level Expert Meeting on the New Arab Regional Investment Agreement”, 14–15 January 2020, Rabat. The meeting provided Arab countries with key recommendations for drafting a new Arab Regional Investment Agreement. It brought together 32 participants from 16 Arab countries and called on UNCTAD to continue its assistance to the League of Arab States towards the conclusion of the regional agreement.

(b) UNCTAD meeting with the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Morocco on the new bilateral investment treaty model of Morocco, 16–17 January 2020, Rabat. The meeting discussed the key elements found in the new model and provided concrete recommendations on certain provisions with a view to strengthening the model’s development dimension.

(c) UNCTAD “Expert Workshop on International Investment Agreements (IIAs) for Sustainable Development”, with the Ministry of Economy of Montenegro, 27–29 January 2020, Geneva. The expert workshop with senior officials from Montenegro working on international investment policymaking questions focused on recent worldwide IIA developments as well as country-specific issues, such as the content of the new model BIT currently being developed, the regional context and the European Union’s new investment policy approach. Presentations were delivered by UNCTAD and external experts.

(d) UNCTAD Virtual Workshop on IIA reform for the Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia (MISA), 17 February 2020, Geneva. The workshop discussed the reform of IIAs and investor-State dispute settlement and shed light on the ongoing efforts of Saudi Arabia to modernize its existing stock of IIAs. It also discussed potential friction between IIA obligations and measures taken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

(e) “UNCTAD – D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation Joint virtual workshop on COVID-19 and IIAs”, 30 June 2020. The workshop provided participants with up-to-date knowledge on policy options for sustainable development-oriented reform of bilateral investment treaties and facilitated discussions on key IIA reform issues. It focused on IIA reform in times of COVID-19 and identified the key provisions found in D-8 countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey) that are in urgent need of reform.

(f) UNCTAD virtual meeting with the Shridath Ramphal Centre of the University of the West Indies and the CARICOM Secretariat on “IIA Reform in the Caribbean in the COVID-19 era”, 21 October 2020. The meeting discussed IIA reform efforts in the Caribbean countries and provided policy recommendations on reforming specific treaty provisions to bring them in line with national development strategies and to minimize the risk of COVID-19 – related ISDS cases.

(g) “UNCTAD–Commonwealth Small States Office virtual meeting on IIA reform”, 30 October 2020. The meeting brought together representatives from the Commonwealth small States and discussed the UNCTAD IIA Reform Accelerator and how it can be used to assist small States in reforming their IIA regimes.

(h) UNCTAD–Egypt General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI) “Workshop on the new model BIT of Egypt”, 19 November 2020. The webinar reviewed the new model BIT of Egypt. It involved all relevant stakeholders in Egypt in charge of the drafting and adoption of the new model. Over 10 ministries participated in the discussions with UNCTAD experts.

547. **Results and impact.** There is strong evidence that the IIA work programme has a concrete and positive impact. UNCTAD policy tools have shaped investment policymaking at all levels.

(a) Forward-looking IIA reform is well under way and involves countries at all levels of development and from all geographical regions. IIA reform has gained momentum and has become even more urgent today with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of

today's new IIAs include several sustainable development-oriented reform elements in line with UNCTAD policy tools (see WIR 2020). Provisions that were considered innovative in pre-2012 IIAs now appear regularly. Highlights of modern treaty making include a sustainable development orientation, preservation of regulatory space, and improvements to or omissions of investment dispute settlement. The most broadly pursued area of reform is preservation of regulatory space. As part of broader IIA reform, countries have implemented many ISDS reform elements in recent IIAs.

(b) Since the launch of UNCTAD options for Phase 2 of IIA Reform (WIR 2017), a growing number of countries have taken steps to modernize their old-generation treaties. Given that, so far, such reform actions have addressed a relatively small number of IIAs, there is broad scope and urgency to pursue them further. The stock of old-generation treaties is 10 times larger than the number of new reform-oriented treaties. Modernization of these treaties remains an important policy challenge.

(c) At the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development, eighth session, that took place on 21 September 2020, several delegates expressed appreciation for UNCTAD assistance related to IIAs and the sustainable development-oriented reform of the IIA regime. A number of delegates highlighted the need for further reform action, particularly in light of the pandemic. They called for the strengthening of that work, including through the outcome of the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. One panellist briefed experts on the impact of UNCTAD work on IIA reform and UNCTAD's analysis on measures taken by many Governments in response to COVID-19, which could create friction with the expansive obligations included in the stock of old-generation international investment agreement.

(d) UNCTAD Virtual IIA Conference 2020: "IIA Reform in Times of COVID-19" held on 26 November 2020 brought together over 200 participants from Governments, international and regional organizations, private sector, academia, civil society and media. Experts generally recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis posed great challenges but also provided a new impetus for the reform of the IIA regime. Countries can build on the growing wealth of IIA reform experience to accelerate the modernization of international investment regime. The Virtual IIA Conference 2020 echoed the need to ensure that the IIA regime promotes and facilitates investment for sustainable development and that it safeguards the right of States to regulate in protection of public health in the post-pandemic era.

(e) Feedback from participants in capacity-building workshops and conferences on IIAs is generally very positive, with an average of 90 per cent stating that the courses contributed substantially to improving their understanding of the key issues at stake. An average of over 80 per cent of respondents also indicated that they had reported on issues related to the Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development to colleagues in their departments and 44 per cent noted that the Investment Policy Framework had prompted their country to reconsider its investment policy strategy. To date some 140 countries (including regional economic integration organizations) have used UNCTAD recommendations on IIA reform to (re)design investment policies and IIA treaty clauses.

Further evidence and positive feedback include:

(a) "It gives me immense pleasure to acknowledge that 'The Guiding Principles for Investment Policymaking for D-8 Countries', developed jointly by UNCTAD and D-8 Secretariat, played an important role in drafting and modifying our domestic and foreign investment policy frameworks, for which Board of Investment is thankful to UNCTAD. I hope that UNCTAD would continue play its role in assisting and capacity-building of developing countries." Executive Director General Board of Investment, Pakistan

(b) "We are very pleased with the success of the Expert Meeting on the new proposed Arab Investment Agreement [...] The meeting will allow Arab countries to align their investment policies with their development aspirations. The meeting embodies the longstanding and productive collaboration and partnership between the Islamic

Development Bank (IsDB) and UNCTAD which have resulted in numerous instances of cooperation, for over a decade, in delivering programmes for officials from IsDB member countries aiming to build their capacity in international investment policymaking.” Manager, Country Strategy and Market Integration Division, Islamic Development Bank.

(c) “... It goes without saying that the quality of the UNCTAD experts and the relevance of their interventions and comments have enabled us to assess the innovations brought by the new Moroccan model of BITs and to measure the consistency of this model with international best practices in this area. I take this opportunity to reiterate my warm thanks and to express my gratitude to you for the availability of UNCTAD to further strengthen its already excellent collaboration with Morocco in order to facilitate the process of modernizing its legal framework for investment.” Department of the Treasury and External Finances, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Morocco.

(d) “We think UNCTAD provides valuable work through analysis and technical assistance in the field of investment particularly on international investment agreements. We are proud to support this work through our strategic partnership with UNCTAD.” Director, Trade Policy and Economic Governance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands.

(e) “We congratulate UNCTAD for its great work on the reform of the IIA regime and today’s conference [the Virtual IIA Conference 2020] is a concrete example of how UNCTAD has been fundamental to this.” Undersecretary for Trade Regulation and Facilitation, Ministry of Economy, Brazil.

C10 Competition and consumer protection policies and frameworks

Table C10

Competition and consumer protection policies and frameworks

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/8X/603	Training programmes on restrictive business practices (competition policies)	1986–	Multi-donors
RAS/0T/IAV	Delivering Block Chain Based Online Dispute Resolution System (BODR)	2020–	Public donation
ROA-2023 (W12)	Global Initiative towards post-Covid-19 resurgence of the MSME sector	2020–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (Y12)	Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Responses	2020–	Development Account

548. **Development context.** Competition law and policy contributes to economic growth and sustainable development through market openness, innovation and economic efficiency, while achieving consumer welfare. Competition policy complements trade policy, ensuring that the benefits brought by trade and investment liberalization are not hampered by anticompetitive business practices. Consumer protection empowers consumers to play an active role in the market, through informed, responsible and sustainable choices, and it ensures that unfair commercial practices are sanctioned, and consumers protected. In a globalized world competition and consumer protection laws and policies are increasingly faced with cross-border challenges, which demand further regional and international cooperation to guarantee a level playing field for business and a high-level of consumer protection across the world.

549. Most of the technical cooperation projects of UNCTAD tend to comprise both competition and consumer protection areas at national level and six projects have a regional dimension:

(a) The project on “Delivering block-chain based online dispute resolution for consumers” which was developed as means to improve international trade and consumer trust in electronic commerce in two ASEAN pilot countries before expanding to other countries from this region;

(b) Implementation of the competition framework in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) region and to support the work of the Commission: the assistance to the drafting of merger regulations within the regional competition rules will strengthen the competition regime of this regional economic organization, paving the way for an effective monitoring of market concentration in a large market that includes eight African member States;

(c) Technical assistance and capacity-building on competition and consumer protection to Portuguese-speaking developing countries, which builds on the common history and language and the similar culture to promote competition and consumer policies as important instruments within these countries’ development strategies;

(d) UNCTAD, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the OECD joint cooperation on the development and reform of competition frameworks across the Arab countries that are members of ESCWA, with a strong regional dimension;

(e) The United Nations Development Account (DA) COVID-19 response technical cooperation projects on “Global Initiative towards post-COVID-19 Resurgence of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Sector” (2023W – MSME project), and on “Strengthening Social Protection for Pandemic Response” (2023Y – social protection project), which have developing countries across the world as beneficiaries with a strong regional focus, in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

550. Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to anticompetitive and unfair business practices: poor business infrastructure and complex regulatory and licensing regimes make it harder for companies to enter these markets; their policies, laws and regulations are often not sufficiently robust, while their enforcement agencies lack the capacity to effectively detect and address many instances of anticompetitive behaviour; and citizens and businesses are less aware of the importance of competition and do not exercise their rights or fulfil their responsibilities. Increasingly, many competition and consumer protection problems have a cross-border component. Companies and supply chains are international, while competition and consumer protection laws and enforcement agencies are primarily national. Individual countries have struggled to address anticompetitive practices at the international level, which requires regional and global collaboration to set and enforce competition rules. The successful implementation of competition and consumer protection policies results in the elimination of anticompetitive regulation and unnecessary barriers to trade imposed by government policies.

551. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries and countries with economies in transition generated new requests and needs for UNCTAD to provide technical assistance on competition and consumer protection policies, leading to new COVID-19 related technical cooperation projects aiming to provide support during the crisis and in the economic recovery process, including the UNDA COVID-19 projects on social protection and the MSMEs, both mentioned above. UNCTAD expertise on competition and consumer protection policies was combined with the expertise of the United Nations regional economic commissions, with which joint work was developed to effectively deliver assistance and capacity-building on the topics of the contribution of competition law and policy to MSMEs and on consumer protection in the provision of health services (including e-health).

552. On the other side, several developing countries requested UNCTAD’s support through urgent advisory services directly addressing the COVID-19 related unfair

commercial and anticompetitive practices taking place in their markets (Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Peru and Uzbekistan⁵⁷) and through specific training activities (Cambodia, Guatemala, Myanmar, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam; and the Arab countries members of UN-ESCWA). Because consumer and competition policies were at the fore front of the public authorities' response to the market disruption caused by COVID-19, UNCTAD disseminated news items and a newsletter gathering the decisions, measures and initiatives adopted by consumer protection agencies and competition authorities, recommending the most relevant actions in both fields during the pandemic.⁵⁸

553. Furthermore, the travel restrictions imposed due to the pandemic outbreak facilitated the multiplication of online meetings and events with representatives from consumer protection agencies, competition authorities and from relevant stakeholders from governmental bodies, academia, the private sector and civil society organizations.

554. In the ASEAN region, UNCTAD, together with its partners such as the ASEAN Secretariat, GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) and Japan, has continued delivering capacity-building activities even in times of COVID-19. Furthermore, UNCTAD has been providing bilateral and ad hoc advisory services and capacity-building activities such as the work carried out for Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar. The detailed information is mentioned below.

555. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD aims to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in adopting or revising competition and consumer protection legislation and policies to align with international best practices, as well as regional frameworks in these areas. Competition and consumer protection policies are complementary to trade and industrial policies and seek to promote economic growth and sustainable development. They play an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 8 – Decent work and Economic growth, Goal 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 10 – Reduced inequalities, Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production, and Goal 17 – Partnership for the Goals.

556. UNCTAD work on competition and consumer protection policies contributes to the strengthening of the competition and consumer protection systems of developing countries and countries with economies in transition by developing policy, legislative and institutional frameworks; drafting legislation adapted to member States' current challenges, particularly during 2020 where COVID-19 has been a pressing issue for many competition and consumer protection authorities; designing and implementing institutions to enforce the laws; building human capacities through training programmes; advocating for a competition and a consumer protection culture and developing competition and consumer protection curricula for universities.

557. **Outputs.** Under the trilateral cooperation agreement between UNCTAD, UN-ESCWA and OECD seeking to support the formulation or improvement of national competition laws, procedures and enforcement in the Arab countries, the first Competition Arab Forum was held in January 2020. The forum was attended by all the countries of the region and competition authorities and experts from other countries (Romania, Turkey, United States, etc.) were also invited to attend. There were four sessions on: competition

⁵⁷ Peru (INDECOPI, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority): request on Consumer Protection legislation and decisions on hoarding and price gauging, April 2020; Dominican Republic (ProConsumidor, Consumer Protection agency): request for information on unsafe products from China related to COVID-19, May 2020; Chile (SERNAC, Consumer Protection agency): request regarding contract cooling off periods in consumer protection legislation, July 2020; Brazil (SENACON, Consumer Protection National Secretary): request for information on the definition of "consumer" in other jurisdictions, July 2020; Uzbekistan (Antimonopoly Committee): request on price regulation and the practice of excessive pricing, an opinion was provided and discussed in a meeting organized in December 2020.

⁵⁸ *COVID-19: Firmer action needed to better protect consumers and Defending competition in the markets during COVID-19*, both of 8 April 2020, available at <https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-firmer-action-needed-better-protect-consumers>, and at <https://unctad.org/news/defending-competition-markets-during-covid-19>. Also, *Airlines must respect consumers' rights*, 4 June 2020, available at <https://unctad.org/news/airlines-must-respect-consumers-rights>.

and economic development; effective competition framework; partnership for development through competition law and policy; and competition in public procurement. Furthermore, a webinar on “Competition law and policy during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflections in the Arab region” was organized in July 2020 to discuss the problems generated by COVID-19 in the economies of the region. In March 2021, the second forum took place, analysing the role played by international and regional organizations in the management of the COVID-19 crisis and presented the best practices developed by member States. In addition, in 2021 the three organisations will jointly organize a training course on competition and public procurement for the technical staff of the Arab competition authorities.

558. The project on “Delivering block-chain based online dispute resolution for consumers” aims to support two beneficiary countries in setting up the legal, policy and technological frameworks necessary to deliver online dispute resolution to consumers, and to allow for cross-border online dispute resolution for consumers. In particular, the project’s goals are to: (a) provide an updated picture of current consumer dispute resolution in beneficiary countries and at the global level, identify best practices and lessons learnt; (b) define technical and infrastructure requirements of beneficiary countries to develop online dispute resolution systems, including through block-chain technology; (c) build capacities of government consumer protection agencies, consumer groups and business associations on consumer online dispute resolution; and (d) build consensus among beneficiary countries on the modalities for delivering consumer online dispute resolution and cost/efficiency improvement of trade among beneficiary countries. The project has been presented to potential South-East Asian beneficiaries.

559. It advanced in the two main research outputs: (a) report on national frameworks for consumer dispute resolution and redress; and (b) report on consumer dispute resolution and redress, online dispute resolution for consumers, including using blockchain technology across the world. The project has been presented to potential South-East Asian beneficiaries, whose formal request is still pending.

560. The merger regulation of WAEMU was prepared in the framework of the peer review of the WAEMU competition law and policy, its goal being to support WAEMU in establishing an enabling environment where the regional competition authority of the WAEMU and its member States are well equipped to tackle market concentration that may undermine the functioning of markets in their regional area. The merger control guidelines of the WAEMU, which had been drafted based on the United Nations Set of Principles and Rules on Competition⁵⁹ and international best practices included in the UNCTAD Model Law on Competition,⁶⁰ were presented, discussed, and validated in a workshop in July 2020. Its adoption will equip the WAEMU and its member States with an appropriate regulatory and institutional framework to assess mergers effectively in their jurisdictions.

561. Under the technical assistance and capacity-building on competition and consumer protection to Portuguese-speaking developing countries, supported by the experience-sharing of Portugal and Brazil in both policy areas and fostering regional cooperation between the beneficiaries and neighbouring countries and other partners, a round of meetings with representatives of Angola, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Portugal, Timor-Leste and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries took place to identify contact points and assess needs for competition and consumer protection advice and training from the beneficiaries. UNCTAD will also associate Brazilian authorities to this process and seeks to enhance cooperation at the regional level with other regional organizations active in the African continent (i.e. Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC) and WAEMU).

⁵⁹ In 1980, the United Nations Conference on Restrictive Business Practices approved the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices for adoption as a resolution 35/63 of the United Nations General Assembly (5 December 1980). Available at <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection>.

⁶⁰ UNCTAD Model Law on Competition, Part 1 and Part 2. Commentaries available at <https://unctad.org/Topic/Competition-and-Consumer-Protection>.

562. Under the two UNDA COVID-19 projects on social protection and the MSMEs (Cluster on access to markets), UNCTAD focused on the contribution of consumer protection policy to social protection in health services provision (including e-health) and, under the second project, on the role of competition law and policy in supporting MSMEs in facing and overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic economic impact. UNCTAD has addressed both topics from a global perspective, although in the MSMEs project, this overall view was complemented by national market studies of developing countries in different continents. The outputs include two overview reports: one on consumer protection and social protection; and another on competition, MSMEs and market access. These reports were commented by the United Nations regional economic commissions as partners to UNCTAD under these projects. In the case of the social protection project, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa and the Pan American Health Organization provided important comments to the report. In 2021, for the MSMEs project, the studies on SMEs, market access and competition in the midst and in the aftermath of COVID 19 of Brazil, South Africa and Thailand will be also drafted and discussed in regional meetings scheduled for the first semester of 2021.

563. Barbados requested UNCTAD assistance in drafting guidelines based on merger provision of the Barbados competition law and supporting the Fair-Trading Commission to effectively undertake merger analysis on applications received from the business community and also to guide lawyers to understand the law as they assist their clients. A merger guideline report was drafted and presented and discussed in a workshop jointly organized by UNCTAD and the Fair-Trading Commission.

564. At the request of the Government of the Philippines representing the ASEAN Committee on Consumer Protection (ACCP) and the ASEAN Secretariat⁶¹, UNCTAD accepted to join a regional technical project supported by the Government of Japan through the Japan–ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), whose objective is to promote sustainable consumption in the ASEAN region, through an ASEAN Toolkit on Sustainable Consumption. The toolkit aims to enhance the knowledge of government officials and relevant stakeholders, such as consumer associations and businesses, by following best practices and models of public policies, addressing the following topics:

- (a) Understanding the concepts and principles of sustainable consumption;
- (b) Best practices and approaches to policies that promote sustainable consumption;
- (c) Tools and instruments used in influencing consumer behaviour, communication/ information provision tools such as product information through labelling and certification, economic instruments such as incentives, and regulatory instruments;
- (d) Use of appropriate instruments and tools in selected areas such as food sector, energy, and consumer electronics; and
- (e) Development of a set of advocacy materials such as slides, infographics and audiovisual presentations, among others, to be used by officials to promote sustainable consumption among consumers.

565. Under the ongoing bilateral cooperation between UNCTAD and UN-ESCWA, a joint workshop on “Consumer Protection in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Focus on Digitalization for the Arab Region” was organized on 3 August 2020.⁶² The webinar gathered consumer protection agencies from UN-ESCWA member States and international experts to discuss how the COVID-19 crisis impacted consumers and identify the challenges that emerged as a result of the pandemic. The webinar also addressed the shift to digitization as more consumers rely on online activities in response to and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁶¹ This project did not lead to a trust funds agreement with UNCTAD, the funds having been nevertheless allocated in consultancies to develop the toolkit and the organization of an event for ASEAN member States to discuss the modules as agreed between the parties involved.

⁶² <https://unctad.org/meeting/consumer-protection-aftermath-covid-19-pandemic-focus-digitalization-arab-region>

566. UNCTAD and the Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), the competition authority of Japan, established a partnership in 2019 to assist Asian and African competition authorities in enforcing competition law to maximize the benefits of well-functioning markets in these countries, which is financially supported through the Japan–ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF). This cooperation with JFTC and JAIF led to the publication in 2020 of the guidance document of the “ASEAN Competition Law and Policy Peer Review”, which is a framework for competition law and policy peer reviews in ASEAN member countries. Also, UNCTAD provided comments to their “Study on recommended procedures for cooperation on cross-border competition cases”.

567. Also in 2020, the Office of Trade and Competition Commission (OTCC) of Thailand requested UNCTAD assistance in the preparation of a market study on the COVID-19 impact assessment of the online travel agency (OTA) in the hospitality industry of Thailand. This project is aimed at reviewing the status of the market of pre- and post-COVID-19, identifying competition concerns and developing guidelines for regulating anticompetitive practices in the market.

568. In Latin America, since the end of the UNCTAD COMPAL regional technical cooperation programme on competition and consumer protection, new activities in this region have been self-funded by beneficiary countries directly. However, a specific project on Competition Compliance in Latin America has been launched by UNCTAD in cooperation with the Zurich University of Management and Law (ZHAW), a regular partner of UNCTAD, which includes the funding of some activities. This project will end in 2021 with the drafting of a guidance document for competition authorities wishing to establish a compliance programme within their competition policy.

569. Within the close cooperation with Latin American countries in consumer protection, UNCTAD organizes every year the UNCTAD–COMPAL International Forum for Consumer Protection, in partnership with the acting Presidency of the Ibero-American Forum of Consumer Protection Agencies (FIAGC), currently Portugal. This is the only regional public discussion dedicated to consumer protection, engaging all relevant stakeholders – private sector, civil society, legal and economic practitioners, and academics -, apart from consumer protection agencies. For the Forum’s agenda UNCTAD suggested three panel topics, closely related to the key topics of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection and ongoing UNCTAD priorities in this field, but the forum was postponed to the Summer of 2021, immediately after the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union Council.

570. Following the UNCTAD voluntary peer review of the competition law and policy of Botswana conducted in 2018, the country established a new authority, namely Competition and Consumer Authority (CCA), in December 2019, combining the mandates of the old Competition Authority and the Consumer Protection Unit which used to function under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry. Botswana also established the Competition and Consumer Tribunal and requested UNCTAD to organize a virtual training seminar on competition and consumer protection laws and policies for the new Tribunal members and CCA Commissions. UNCTAD planned for the training to be delivered in December 2020. However, due to unavailability of the beneficiaries during the month of December, the training seminar was postponed to March 2021. The training was organized at no cost to UNCTAD with the participation of eminent experts and former and current competition authority heads. The training was hosted by Botswana Competition and Consumer Tribunal on a virtual platform. The training assisted the country’s adjudicators to better understand and implement these policies.

571. In 2020, UNCTAD organized and co-organized several webinars to serve member States’ requests and needs in both policy areas and also spoke in and moderated discussion panels organized by different partners, actively participating in more than 20 webinars across all continents. A detailed list of webinars is listed below:

- (a) First joint UN-ESCWA, UNCTAD and OECD Competition Forum for the Arab region, January 2020;⁶³
- (b) Istanbul Competition Forum Workshop, jointly organized by UNCTAD and Turkish Competition Authority, March 2020;⁶⁴
- (c) UNCTAD, ISO Committee on Consumer Policy (ISO/COPOLCO) and Consumers International joint webinar on “Using standards as a tool for consumer protection”, April 2020;⁶⁵
- (d) UNCTAD and the Ecuadorian Institute of Competition Law (IEDC) joint webinar on “The relevance of competition policy in the face of the effects of the economic crisis generated by COVID-19”, May 2020;
- (e) Istanbul Competition Forum workshop on “Competition during and in the aftermath of COVID-19”, jointly organized by UNCTAD and Turkish Competition Authority, June 2020;⁶⁶ -
- (f) UNCTAD webinar on “Key competition and consumer protection priorities for regional integration in Africa”, June 2020;⁶⁷
- (g) UNCTAD webinar on “Competition policy in times of COVID-19: is there a role in international cooperation?”, June 2020;⁶⁸
- (h) UN-ESCWA, UNCTAD and OECD joint webinar on “Competition law and policy during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflections in the Arab region”, July 2020;⁶⁹
- (i) UNCTAD virtual training workshop for Cambodian and Myanmar competition authorities on “How competition agencies take action against cartels or abuse of dominant position in the time of Covid-19 pandemic?”, July 2020;⁷⁰
- (j) UNCTAD and Guatemala webinars titled “The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy: the role of competition policy in crisis management and economic recovery” and “Why it is appropriate for Guatemala to equip itself with a Law for the Promotion and Defence of Competition”, July 2020;
- (k) UNCTAD and WAEMU joint regional workshop to validate the draft merger regulation of the WAEMU, July 2020;
- (l) XIV Central American Competition Forum, “Competition policy in the face of the crisis created by COVID-19 in Central America”, organized jointly with the Dominican Republic Competition Authority, 2020;
- (m) UN-ESCWA, UNCTAD and OECD joint webinar on “Consumer Protection in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Focus on Digitalization for the Arab Region”, August 2020;⁷¹

⁶³ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/first-joint-un-escwa-unctad-oecd-competition-forum-arab-region>.

⁶⁴ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/istanbul-competition-forum-workshop>.

⁶⁵ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/unctad-iso-copolco-consumers-international-joint-webinar-using-standards-tool-consumer>.

⁶⁶ See <https://icf.rekabet.gov.tr/Home/IndexWebinar>.

⁶⁷ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/key-competition-and-consumer-protection-priorities-regional-integration-africa-webinar>.

⁶⁸ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/unctad-webinar-event-competition-policy-times-covid19-there-role-international-cooperation>.

⁶⁹ See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/competition-law-and-policy-during-and-aftermath-covid-19-pandemic-reflections-arab-region>.

⁷⁰ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/virtual-capacity-building-workshop-how-competition-authorities-act-against-cartels-and>.

⁷¹ See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/consumer-protection-aftermath-covid-19-pandemic-focus-digitalization>.

(n) UNCTAD and UN-ECLAC joint webinar on “Competition policy towards the COVID-19 crisis and the reactivation, with a focus on the MSME sector”, under the COVID-19 DA project on SMEs, August 2020;⁷²

(o) UNCTAD and UNECA joint Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting to review the publication on “Towards a Common Investment Area in the African Continental Free Trade Area: Policy Options Towards Levelling the Playing Field for Intra-African Investment”, September 2020 (UNCTAD contributed to Chapter 4 on “Link between Competition and Investment – Competition as an Investment Enabler” and presented the comments in the meeting);

(p) UNCTAD Barbados online workshop on the Merger Guidelines Report, jointly organized with the Barbados Fair Trading Commission, 2020;

(q) Joint European Commission (EC)-UNCTAD workshop on “Kick-starting consumer product safety: a worthwhile endeavour”, International Product Safety Week 2020, for Consumer Product Safety agencies, November 2020;⁷³

(r) UNCTAD virtual training workshop for Myanmar competition authority on “Competition issues and State aid”, November 2020;⁷⁴

(s) Istanbul Competition Forum Annual Webinar, jointly organized by UNCTAD and the Turkish Competition Authority, December 2020;⁷⁵

572. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition understand the key role of competition and consumer policies as instruments to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development and increasingly request UNCTAD assistance in the assessment and revision of existing legislation or the strengthening of experts and stakeholders’ capacities. During the COVID-19 context, advisory services have been regularly delivered by UNCTAD outside a formal technical cooperation project, such as advisory service on competition policy to the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), on competition law and policy to Annual Symposium of Kenya, and advisory service to the Biennial Conference of the African Competition Forum.

573. **Results and impact.** Technical assistance is an important pillar of the work of UNCTAD in the field of competition and consumer policies and the significant results have been achieved to date. The increased number of requests for technical assistance and capacity-building from developing countries and countries with economies in transition during 2020 and especially after the pandemic outbreak, underlined the expertise and the relevance of the technical cooperation services delivered by the Competition and Consumer Policies Branch. The quick adjustment and flexibility undertaken by the Branch team under this pillar of work throughout 2020 allowed UNCTAD to fully correspond to the member States’ requests, and to address their needs and their challenges in the best possible manner. UNCTAD strongly supported member States in tackling market disruptions in the form of unfair commercial and anticompetitive practices through advisory services, technical assistance and capacity-building activities conducted online. These services disseminated international experiences and best practices, providing a sound background for policy measures and legislative and regulatory frameworks. The UNCTAD multi-stakeholder approach in these policy areas and the combination of national-level with regional-level activities have been extremely successful in the competition and consumer protection fields. Furthermore, established UNCTAD partnerships with national, regional, and international organizations and institutions, combining knowledge, technical and financial support, allow the activities in question to be carried out in the most efficient way and to produce tangible outcomes.

⁷² See https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/agenda_eng_0.pdf.

⁷³ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/joint-ec-unctad-workshop-kick-starting-consumer-product-safety-worthwhile-endeavour>; <https://www.ipsw2020.eu/agenda?session=66445>.

⁷⁴ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/virtual-training-workshop-competition-issues-and-state-aid-myanmar-competition-commission>.

⁷⁵ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/istanbul-competition-forum-annual-webinar>.

574. Efficient markets are indispensable for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Competition and consumer protection are two disciplines that directly affect consumer welfare and play a direct and important role in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth and reducing poverty, which underlines a need for complementarity in their design and application. UNCTAD considers important to continue to promote synergies between both policies in order to create a competitive business environment that benefit both consumers and businesses, namely in the context of the rapid growth of e-commerce and the development of new business models powered by large digital platforms are dramatically changing market structure and impacting on consumption patterns at a rapid pace.

575. Concretely on the two UNDA COVID-19 projects, UNCTAD is contributing to the global immediate response to member States in two important and different areas of the pandemic: the health crisis and the economic turmoil that it generated. On the health front, UNCTAD input refers to the role of consumer protection in the provision of basic health services and includes policy recommendations suggested to member States, aiming to improve consumer protection in the provision of health services, including in eHealth. On the socioeconomic front, UNCTAD technical support expects to promote policies that support competition policy towards stronger MSMEs to achieve a successful economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19. The cooperation with the United Nations regional economic commissions and other international organizations such as WHO has already led to increased visibility of UNCTAD work as a focal point for both competition and consumer protection policies and has widened considerably the cooperation opportunities at different regional levels, which is one of the positive results of the participation in the UNDA COVID-19 joint projects.

C99 Other

Table C99

Others

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
<i>Cross Divisional</i>			
URT/0T/FBC	UNDAF II, inclusive growth 2016 DRTF	2017–	One United Nations
<i>Division on Investment and Enterprise</i>			
INT/0T/3AO	Support to the UNCTAD–ICC Investment Advisory Council	2003–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/BAQ	Capacity-Building in Investment for Development	2011–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/GAR	Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) Regulator Capacity-Building	2018–	Public donations
INT/0T/ICC	Sustainable stock Exchanges (SSE) Multi-donor	2020–	Multi-donors
<i>Division on Globalization and Development Strategies</i>			
INT/0T/FAP	Wuhan Globalization Seminars	2016–	China

1. Capital markets and responsible investment

576. **Development context.** UNCTAD has deepened its work on responsible investment through several channels, particularly the activities of the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) initiative. Launched in 2009, the SSE was built on the demand from

exchanges for a place to come together with investors, companies and policymakers to share good practices and challenges in a multi-stakeholder environment. The initiative has grown into what is now a global partnership platform including most of the world's stock exchanges. In 2020, the membership of stock exchanges grew to 100 stock exchanges.

577. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD work on responsible investment aims to achieve the following objectives through research, consensus-building and technical assistance:

- (a) Providing capital market stakeholders worldwide with proof of concept of supporting the Sustainable Development Goals through capital market regulation, training and education, and market norms;
- (b) Supplying data to help markets better react to sustainability challenges;
- (c) Sharing of experiences and learning from other markets;
- (d) Developing a network support system.

578. **Outputs.** In 2020, at the request of the United Nations Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance, the SSE initiative produced a draft policy guidance for stock exchanges on how exchanges can promote the adoption and implementation of best practice in climate related corporate disclosure among their listed companies. A separate research project in 2020 produced draft policy guidance for derivatives exchanges on how they can best integrate sustainable development into their products and services. The derivatives research was produced in collaboration with the World Federation of Exchanges, the global industry association for exchanges, and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, the largest derivative exchange in the world. The SSE initiative also further strengthened its online database with data on the sustainability practices of over 100 stock exchanges worldwide, the most comprehensive database on stock exchanges publicly available. In 2020, the SSE initiative also launched a new online database of stock exchange sustainability disclosure guidance documents; the database contains a comprehensive collection of all such guidance documents in the world.

579. The SSE held a number of events aimed at disseminating knowledge and building consensus on capital market transparency and sustainability, including the following key events:

- (a) SSE convened two Advisory Group meetings, one in July on derivatives exchanges and one in October on climate disclosure, to build consensus on how exchanges can support sustainable finance and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
- (b) SSE Ring the Bell for Gender Equality events raised awareness on the business case for women's economic empowerment and the opportunities for the private sector to advance gender equality and sustainable development in March 2020 at 73 stock exchanges worldwide (note 95 exchanges had planned such events but 22 were forced to be cancelled due to the pandemic);
- (c) SSE partnered with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to hold 4 workshops in Indonesia, Myanmar, Ukraine and East Asia and the Pacific, to provide training on sustainability reporting to stock exchange officials, security market regulators, investors and listed companies;
- (d) Fourteen webinars were held in 2020 to provide technical assistance on responsible investment on the following topics: climate disclosure; green, social and sustainability bonds (special focus on COVID-19 relief bonds); gender equality; and integrating sustainability within derivative exchange operations. Each webinar involved the participation of between 30 and 50 stock exchanges and other capital market stakeholders.

580. The SSE also provided technical assistance to stock exchanges who are working to develop guidance on sustainability reporting for their market as part of its objective to have all stock exchanges providing guidance on sustainability reporting.

581. **Results.** In 2020, the SSE increased its membership by 4 per cent to 100 SSE partner exchanges. Nine stock exchanges published a guidance for their market on sustainability reporting in 2020. There are now 56 stock exchanges with guidance on

sustainability reporting, up from just 14 when the SSE started encouraging exchanges to do this in 2015 (with 77 per cent of these guidance documents making explicit reference to the work of the SSE).

582. SSE work was endorsed by a number of key institutions and private sector partners, including:

(a) “For COP26 we are working with countries, initiatives, and international standard setters to ensure that there is a globally consistent approach to climate-related reporting, and the SSE work will be critical to support this. Through its work with stock exchanges, the SSE plays an important strategic role in the overall drive for sustainable finance and the implementation of the TCFD recommendations.” – United Nations Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance.

(b) “The SSE work on sustainable finance, ESG disclosure, responsible investing, risk mitigation, and benchmarking has provided a template on sustainability for stock exchanges worldwide.” – Chief Commercial Officer, Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

2. Addressing challenges and opportunities in economic globalization

Wuhan Globalization Seminars

583. **Development context.** The rapid and successful integration of China into the world economy since the 1990s provides valuable lessons and insights of the opportunities and challenges posed by economic globalization for the process of structural transformation and development. Studying the recent development experiences of China and potential implications for own national development strategies is therefore of great significance for policymakers from other developing nations.

584. The Wuhan Seminars are a training programme, jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce of China and UNCTAD since 2004. The programme is focused on the area of economic globalization and the development experience of China.

585. **Objectives and features.** The main objective of the project is to enable policymakers from developing nations to study China’s development experience in the context of the dynamics of economic globalization processes, and to gain a deeper understanding of strategic requirements for their national development processes in this context. Furthermore, the project also aims at supporting Chinese policymakers in their efforts to keep abreast of ongoing developments in the global economy and to enhance sensitivity to policy options at national levels to meet new challenges.

586. **Outputs.** Entrusted by the Ministry of Commerce of China, the China–Europe Vocational Training Centre and UNCTAD have successfully held and organized well over 20 international seminars on a range of issues relating to economic globalization processes, their impact on trade, industrialization and macro-financial policy spaces in developing countries, as well as lessons to be learned from the development experience of China.

587. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual organization of teaching activities and study tours on the ground was not possible because of travel restrictions. A switch to the virtual organization of the seminars also was not feasible, since teaching takes place over several full days per thematic bloc and brings together around 40 to 60 students from all parts of the developing world. This meant that time differences made appropriate coverage of teaching materials and inclusive discussions impossible. In these exceptional circumstances, the Division instead used part of the available funds to produce and prepare inputs and materials for future seminars, in particular in the area of South–South cooperation, on systemic issues in the global economy (including in the context of the UNCTAD fourth session of its Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development) and on specific aspects of the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as combating global inequalities and reducing illicit financial flows from developing countries.

588. **Results.** Since the beginning of the project, nearly 1,000 governmental officials from 89 developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and Oceania participated in the programme. The seminar series, including in particular the Economic

Globalization series, has persistently received highly positive feedback and remains very popular with participants. The programme overall is very much welcomed by policymakers in developing nations and has, over the years, impacted substantially on training for developmental policy analysis and design.

IV. Theme D: Empowering people, investing in their future

589. The transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It aims at ending poverty in all its forms and improving human well-being. The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would require, on the one hand, sound strategies and policies made by Governments and, on the other hand, the engagement of all people from different sectors of society, including local authorities, business and industry, non-governmental organizations, women and farmers. To support policymaking and the effective participation of people in this new development process, it is essential to strengthen their skills and update their knowledge base through capacity-building activities.

590. UNCTAD has developed well-targeted technical assistance programmes (including training) to build capacity for various stakeholders including policymakers, academic institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and port operators in developing countries. Furthermore, UNCTAD supports developing country policymakers in mainstreaming gender in trade policy and empowering women in trade.

591. In this section, reports are presented on three products under the theme “Empowering people, investing in their future”. The reports highlight main technical cooperation activities carried out in 2020 and key results to date. Technical cooperation projects that are pertinent to the aforementioned theme but not linked with any of the existing three products in this thematic area are reported on under “D99 Other”.

D1 Trade, gender and development

Table D1
Trade, gender and development

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
MYA/0T/HBI	United Nations Trade Cluster Myanmar	2019–	United Nations Office for Project Services – Switzerland
INT/0T/CAI	Capacity-Building in Trade and Gender	2013–	Multi-donor
INT/0T/JAC	EIF-Regional Project Promoting Gender Responsive Trade Policy in the LDCs	2020–	Enhanced Integrated Framework
RAS/0T/HAQ	Transparency in Trade Regulation and Facilitation in PACER Plus	2018–	Australia, New Zealand
ROA-1617 (J10)	Informal cross-border trade for empowerment of women, economic development and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa	2016–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (D12)	Data and statistics for more gender-responsive trade policies in Africa, the	2020–	Development Account

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
	Caucasus and Central Asia		
ROA-2023 (W12)	Global Initiative towards post-COVID-19 resurgence of the MSME sector	2020–	Development Account

592. **Development context.** Women are important players in trade in their roles as producers, workers, entrepreneurs and traders: they have increased their share of the labour force, of management jobs and roles as entrepreneurs, and their growing participation in the economy has been a major engine of growth and competitiveness. Yet, despite these advancements, women’s potential in trade is too often held back by the many constraints they face.

593. Women are also more vulnerable to economic shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided new evidence of the fact that economic and social crises tend to exacerbate gender inequalities, risking reversing decades of progress: women are more at risk of losing jobs because their participation in the labour market is often in the form of temporary and part-time employment, and they are often less entitled than men to social protection, as eligibility frequently depends upon formal employment. Moreover, female-dominated sectors, such as the services sector, have been the most affected by the pandemic. Finally, containment measures have contributed to an increase in the already heavy burden of unpaid work borne by women, and in the rates of domestic violence.

594. Trade and trade policy can play a key role in fostering a more sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic. They also remain a powerful driving force in supporting the global efforts towards the realization of broader women’s economic empowerment and gender equality goals. For this to happen, an in-depth understanding of the gender ramifications of trade policy is necessary to make trade a tool for achieving more inclusive and gender-equal economies after the pandemic.

595. **Objectives and features.** The Trade, Gender and Development Programme assists member countries in enhancing their understanding of the links between trade and gender, in conducting gender impact analyses of trade policies and agreements, as well as in the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive trade policies. It does so by (a) carrying out analytical activities, (b) implementing capacity development and technical cooperation activities and (c) promoting policy advocacy and intergovernmental dialogue. Through its work programme on trade, gender and development, UNCTAD contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8, on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, by promoting the design and implementation of macroeconomic policies, in particular trade policies, that are gender inclusive. UNCTAD work in this area is also strongly aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5 and recognizes gender equality and women’s economic empowerment as key elements to achieve the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

596. **Outputs.** In 2020, the Trade, Gender and Development Programme assisted beneficiary countries in assessing the gender effects of trade policies, and in devising strategies and policy measures to overcome gender-based constraints that hinder inclusive development. Activities carried out include:

Training

(a) Online course titled “Trade and gender linkages: An analysis of the Least Developed Countries”. In 2020, preparatory work had started for the development of the teaching package which constitutes the basis of the online courses scheduled to take place in English and French from May to July 2021. One hundred participants were selected for the course in English, 83 for the course in French.

(b) UNCTAD standard online course on trade and gender, with optional module dedicated to MERCOSUR (23 March–17 May 2020). The course is part of the capacity-building project funded by the Government of Finland and is based on volume 1 of the UNCTAD teaching manual on trade, and on the regional module titled “Trade and gender

linkages: an analysis of MERCOSUR”. The course was delivered in English, French and Spanish and hosted 128 participants from 27 countries, 93 women and 35 men. The objective of this distance-learning initiative is to contribute to improving the capacity of policymakers to incorporate gender considerations in trade policy formulation and implementation; of academics to include gender issues in their research and teaching work; and of representatives of civil society to build their advocacy work on solid bases. Moreover, the courses allow participants to build professional networks and exchange views, good practices and lessons learned through a digitally shared space. The courses provide a timely response to the increased need for digital solutions and online capacity-building opportunities during the health crisis and remain a unique learning instrument.

(c) Online courses titled “The Gender Impact of Technological Upgrading in Agriculture” (23 November–13 December 2020). This is the first course devoted to a specific issue within the trade and gender nexus delivered by UNCTAD. It was offered over a period of three weeks and was focused on the links between technology in agriculture and trade from a gender perspective. The course hosted 110 participants from 51 countries, 80 women and 30 men.

(d) Training programme titled “Trade rules and procedures, and entrepreneurship” for women small-scale and informal cross-border traders. In October 2020, UNCTAD started to implement new capacity-building activities on women small-scale/informal cross-border traders in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia as part of the multi-agency project “Global Initiative towards post-COVID-19 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.” The project builds upon the success of a previous project on the same issues carried out by UNCTAD in the same target countries in 2016-2019. While preparatory work for the workshops was carried out during 2020, the trainings took place in February 2021 at four border crossings in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

Analytical activities

597. The analytical work conducted by the Trade, Gender and Development Programme in 2020 focused on the drafting of the following studies:

(a) Teaching module: Trade and gender linkages: An analysis of the Least Developed Countries (advanced draft in 2020). This joint UNCTAD-EIF publication discusses the gender implications of international trade and regional/global economic integration in the LDCs. It examines the socioeconomic outlook of LDCs and existing gender inequalities through country perspectives and puts forth policy recommendations. It covers 47 countries from different geographical regions (33 from Africa, 9 from Asia, 4 from the Pacific, and 1 from the Caribbean). The publication will be available in English and French.

(b) Teaching module: The Gender Impact of Technological Upgrading in Agriculture. The module examines the relationship between technology in agriculture and trade from a gender perspective. It is a unique contribution in bringing the trade and gender framework developed in previous teaching modules to bear on two interrelated topical areas of great significance for women’s economic well-being and participation in trade: agriculture and technology.

(c) Teaching module: Trade and Gender Linkages: An Analysis of Central America. This publication is the eighth module of the teaching package on trade and gender and carries out an analysis of trade and gender in the context of six Central American countries.

(d) Case study: A gender assessment of Myanmar and of the Inle Lake area with a focus on the agriculture and tourism sectors. The study presents a gender analysis of the agriculture and tourism sectors in a specific region of Myanmar – the Inle Lake area, and investigates how to improve women’s participation in the tea, avocado and ginger value chains, as well as in the tourism sector.

(e) Case study: Women producers in the economy of Kiribati and their participation in inter-island and international trade. This study investigates the income-

generating economic activities of women producers and traders in Kiribati and the constraints they face while participating in production and trade activities.

Events and workshops – Awareness-raising and policy dialogue on the trade and gender nexus

598. During the period under review the Trade, Gender and Development Programme organized the following meetings and events on the topic of trade and gender:

(a) “Applying a gender lens to WTO” (19/05/2020) – co-organized by WTO, ITC and UNCTAD. The event aimed to support governments to integrate gender issues into their trade policies, programmes and negotiations, by defining what applying a gender lens means. It provided an opportunity to clarify key concepts, unpack terminologies and methodologies and more specifically look at how to make WTO agreements and negotiations more gender responsive. It also looked at some of the concrete tools developed by international organisations (WTO, UNCTAD, ITC) linking trade and gender.

(b) “New Instruments, Approaches and Frameworks in Trade Policy Towards Gender Equality and Women’s Economic Empowerment” (13/10 2020). The event was organized within the UNCTAD series of short courses on key international economic and development issues.

(c) In-person meetings and events planned during the first semester of 2020 (e.g. side event at the Commission on the Status of Women and at the WTO Public Forum) had to be cancelled because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

599. **Results.** The above activities yielded positive and multiplier effects in terms of enhanced capacities to mainstream gender into trade policy.

600. According to the feedback received on the standard, regional and thematic editions of the online course on trade and gender, the courses succeeded in preparing participants to conduct their own research on the topic, and/or incorporate trade and gender concepts into their policy-related work. The majority of participants reported that they had acquired the necessary skills to assist policymakers in their own country to mainstream gender in trade policy formulation and implementation. Overall, 58 per cent of participants rated the courses as “excellent”, 31 per cent as “very good” and 11 per cent as “satisfactory”. Nobody rated the courses as “unsatisfactory” or “poor”.

601. Below are some quotes from participants’ evaluations:

(a) “I will rank this course ‘excellent’. Right from the ease of registration, prompt delivery of clear information, the resourcefulness of the facilitator, richness of course contents and the depth of knowledge that other course participants brought to the course. I will highly recommend the course.” Head of Gender and Quality Management Systems, Solidaridad West Africa, Ghana.

(b) “I will use the material acquired to formulate some policy briefs and policy papers with regards to trade, gender and agriculture in Cameroon and other parts of world, and regional trade agreements.” Research Officer, Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development, Cameroon.

(c) “Issues on gender and gender mainstreaming are not entrenched in Malawi, I am ready to fill this gap with the gained knowledge.” Team Leader, DMT Consult, Malawi.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Mention of any firm or licensed process does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations.

D3 Entrepreneurship for sustainable development

Table D3

Entrepreneurship development for sustainable development

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
ANG/0T/FBK	European Union–UNCTAD Joint Programme Train for Trade II	2017–	European Union
NAM/0T/IAX	Entrepreneurship Development Namibia	2019–	United Nations Development Programme
SAU/0T/CBI	Entrepreneurship Development Programme (Saudi Arabia)	2014–	Saudi Arabia
INT/0T/BAQ	Capacity-Building in Investment for Development	2011–	Multi-donors
INT/0T/BBV	Strengthening SMEs in developing countries and countries with economies in transition	2012–	Private sector companies
ROA-1819 (AV11)	Promoting Refugee and Migrant Entrepreneurship in East Africa, the Andean region and the Middle East	2018–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (W12)	Global Initiative towards post-COVID-19 resurgence of the MSME sector	2020-	Development Account

602. **Development context.** The General Assembly of the United Nations, recalling its resolutions 67/202 of 21 December 2012, 69/210 of 19 December 2014, 71/221 of 21 December 2016, and 73/225 of 20 December 2018, emphasized the pivotal role of entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions and acknowledged UNCTAD work in entrepreneurship for development in its resolution 75/211⁷⁷, adopted on 21 December 2020. Recognizing the value of entrepreneurship education and the dissemination of entrepreneurial thinking across all sectors, the General Assembly encouraged UNCTAD to continue with its behavioural approach programme, Empretec, and called upon UNCTAD to continue to assist Member States to identify, formulate, implement and assess coherent policy measures on entrepreneurship and the promotion of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Moreover, the principal political declaration of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development⁷⁸ (Nairobi Azimio), in its paragraph 17, states: “We call upon UNCTAD to further develop its activities for promoting and facilitating investment and entrepreneurship for sustainable development”. On the role of UNCTAD, the outcome document, paragraph 76 (w) of the Nairobi Maafikiano mandates UNCTAD to: Develop and disseminate further its Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and assist developing countries in building a competitive microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises sector, as well as better integrating into global value chains, including through its Empretec programme, including for the promotion of youth and women’s entrepreneurship, and smallholding farmers.

⁷⁷ United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/211 titled “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020”.

⁷⁸ Fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (17–22 July 2016, Nairobi).

603. In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by United Nations Member States in September 2015, also emphasizes the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable development, particularly in Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 8.

604. These mandates underpin UNCTAD technical assistance work on entrepreneurship for sustainable development.

605. **Objectives and features.** UNCTAD assistance to member States in the area includes the identification, formulation, implementation and assessment of coherent policy measures that support entrepreneurship and the promotion of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises. The objective is to support member States, at their request, in designing initiatives, and identifying measures and institutions that will promote entrepreneurship across six interrelated priority areas:⁷⁹ formulating national entrepreneurship strategy; optimizing the regulatory environment; enhancing entrepreneurship education and skills development; facilitating technology exchange and innovation; improving access to finance; and promoting awareness and networking.

606. UNCTAD, in cooperation with various United Nations entities,⁸⁰ prepared a report to review the progress of the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 73/225 on entrepreneurship for sustainable development since its adoption in December 2018. The report includes an overview of recent developments in entrepreneurship and the promotion of microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises and identifies best practices and measures taken to support entrepreneurship at the national, regional and international levels, including in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

607. The other pillar of UNCTAD assistance to member States focuses on developing entrepreneurial skills and building local productive capacities of MSMEs, through UNCTAD Empretec and Business Linkages programmes.

608. Since its inception, the Empretec programme has been installed in over 40 countries and has been assisting entrepreneurs by establishing self-sustained, local market-driven entrepreneurship development centres (Empretec national centres). In more than three decades of activity, more than 500,000 entrepreneurs have benefited from Empretec workshops and business development services available in the existing network of Empretec centres worldwide, improving their efficiency, and contribution to job creation in the hosting countries.

609. The Business Linkages programme seeks to upgrade the capacity of local suppliers and facilitate their integration into global and/or regional value chains through business links with large international or domestic companies. The programme currently operates in nine developing countries and has created substantial and mutually beneficial results, both for small suppliers and large domestic or international enterprises. The programme is increasingly geared to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, leveraging the incentives and resources of the private sector to adopt environmental and labour standards and ensure the beneficial inclusion of the poorest segment of the population, especially in rural settings.

610. As part of the United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, since April 2020 UNCTAD has been coordinating the design and implementation of the United Nations Development Account project “Global Initiative towards post-COVID-19 resurgence of the micro, small and medium enterprise sector” (MSME surge project). The project is being implemented jointly by UNCTAD together with DESA and all regional commissions, namely ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and ECE. It aims to strengthen the capacity and resilience of MSMEs in developing countries and economies in transition to mitigate the economic and social impact of the global

⁷⁹ As identified in the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework – EPF, launched in 2012.

⁸⁰ Including the regional commissions, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

COVID-19 crisis. During the first and second phases of the project, partner agencies are assisting governments and entrepreneurs by providing targeted advisory and capacity-building services. The project is delivering an electronic knowledge platform to facilitate the access of Governments and MSMEs to relevant information, entrepreneurship skills and business management knowledge, focusing on the most critical areas for recovery such as access to finance, access to markets and access to technologies. In addition, UNCTAD provides online support in such areas as entrepreneurship policies, Empretec, training for trainers, including for low literacy people; and farming as a business. Other capacity-building activities cover accounting and reporting for MSMEs, including on environmental and social issues, to facilitate their integration into global value chains; and MSMEs access to markets.

611. **Outputs.** The main outputs in 2020 are reported below. Country level activities have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing to halt most of the in-presence training and services provided by national implementing partners.

Entrepreneurship Policies

Angola – National entrepreneurship strategy

612. As part of the activities of the European Union–UNCTAD joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, the design of initiatives and measures to promote entrepreneurship is a key element of the UNCTAD Empretec component aimed at supporting the Government of Angola to formulate an entrepreneurship strategy. The assessment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Angola on the six key dimensions of the UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework (EPF) continued in 2020. In July 2020, UNCTAD and the Angolan National Small and Micro Enterprises Support Institute (INAPEM), in coordination with the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, organized a webinar to formulate a consensus-based approach on developing a national entrepreneurship strategy for the country, and build the capacity of policymakers and other stakeholders to implement it. More than 50 participants, representing the Government and different parts of the private sector, discussed the results of a perceptions survey, carried out by UNCTAD, of the existing entrepreneurship ecosystem in Angola. Consensus was formed on the need to develop a comprehensive national entrepreneurship strategy through an inclusive process.

Nigeria – Regional round table on entrepreneurship for sustainable development

613. In February 2020, UNCTAD and its Empretec centre in Nigeria (Empretec Nigeria Foundation) organized an Africa regional round table titled “Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development” in Lagos. The event was attended by more than 500 people, including representatives of eight African Empretec centers. Discussions focused on the importance of entrepreneurship policy in strengthening an enabling entrepreneurship environment, and key challenges in developing a national entrepreneurship strategy were examined. The event, opened by the Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment, included interventions by representatives of key agencies in the areas of entrepreneurship and development, export promotion, investment, academia, and the private sector. UNCTAD presented its Entrepreneurship Policy Framework as a means to ensure a holistic and coherent approach in designing and implementing national entrepreneurship strategies and to facilitate stakeholder coordination.

Seychelles – National workshop on entrepreneurship development

614. As part of the Investment Policy Review for Seychelles, whose strategic chapter links investment promotion and entrepreneurship development in Seychelles, UNCTAD conducted a fact-finding mission in January 2020 and held consultations with several stakeholders involved with investment and entrepreneurship policy issues. UNCTAD, the Department of Industry and Entrepreneurship Development (DOIED), the Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning, and the Seychelles Investment Board also organized a national workshop to identify the barriers to entrepreneurship and discuss potential policy recommendations. The findings and conclusion of the workshop are

integrated in the strategic chapter on Entrepreneurship of the Investment Policy Review for Seychelles.

Zimbabwe – Mapping the country’s entrepreneurial ecosystem

615. UNCTAD assisted its Empretec centre in Zimbabwe (Empretec Zimbabwe), in cooperation with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, in organizing a webinar to discuss opportunities and constraints to sustainable entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. The virtual gathering, which took place in June 2020, brought together different members of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Zimbabwe to deliberate on the key environmental issues affecting them. Participants discussed Zimbabwe’s Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) which aims, among other things, to facilitate access to appropriate and affordable workspaces, promote horizontal and vertical linkages amongst SMEs, and between SMEs and large corporations, and improve access to finance through various institutions operating in the country.

Entrepreneurship policies for migrants and refugees

616. In 2020, UNCTAD continued to raise attention on migrant and refugee entrepreneurs, highlighting the challenges they face, and the impact of good practices worldwide. This is evidenced in the report of the Secretary-General on “Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development”, prepared for the seventy-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.⁸¹ In partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UNCTAD launched an e-learning course for policymakers and practitioners on entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees. The course is available in English and Spanish.

617. At the national level, UNCTAD conducted field research in Ecuador and Uganda to collect up-to-date information on their respective entrepreneurship ecosystems, their inclusive nature and vulnerabilities that surfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The activities were carried out in coordination with governmental focal points, IOM, UNHCR and other local partners and will inform national workshops planned in 2021.

Entrepreneurship policies for post-COVID MSME recovery and resurgence

618. As part of the MSME surge project, UNCTAD and UNITAR joined efforts to host a series of four virtual roundtables on the impact of the global pandemic on entrepreneurship and MSMEs, and examined what government policies would lead to resilient, “green” and inclusive recovery. The four webinars, held between September and December 2020, provided insight to policymakers and MSMEs to better understand the impact of the health and economic crises brought about by the pandemic and identify policy options to mitigate this unprecedented situation. Among the main topics discussed during the series of virtual events, attended by over 630 participants, were: MSME recovery and resilience, digital and innovative solutions for MSME resurgence and inclusive entrepreneurship.

619. In 2020, cooperation began between UNCTAD and the Global SME Policy Network, represented by Prince Sultan University in Saudi Arabia, in the field of MSMEs. The project aims to help address the challenges posed by COVID-19 for small businesses, and contribute to a green, resilient, and inclusive recovery. The two parties undertook a joint survey to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on MSMEs at the global level.

United Nations Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) day 2020

620. In celebration of MSME Day, UNCTAD organized and hosted a global event jointly with DESA, UNIDO and the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) and supported by the Permanent Mission of Argentina. The virtual event was held on 25 June 2020, and brought together ministers, high level policy makers, leadership of major international organizations, business associations, academia, entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders. The event provided the opportunity for an interactive stakeholder dialogue on how to support MSMEs and enhance their role and impact on sustainable and inclusive

⁸¹ A/75/257.

growth in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the post COVID-19 resurgence.

Empretec

621. The advent of COVID-19 and national responses to contain the virus severely affected Empretec project activities under the installation and consolidation phase, notably in Angola, India, Namibia and Saudi Arabia, and also at the global level. Consequently, only two Empretec training events, coordinated by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Empretec centre in Nigeria, took place in person, at the end of February 2020.

622. Such an unprecedented situation called for international organizations to join forces to develop and implement new tools to continue delivering assistance to member States. Though most of the Empretec training activities were postponed, as their full delivery requires in-person format, UNCTAD organized several training-of-trainers activities and webinars for its networks of Empretec trainers and Empretec graduates (empretecos/empretecas).

623. UNCTAD is following up with national focal points from Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Indonesia, Lesotho, Rwanda, Seychelles and Curaçao on their official requests for Empretec installation.

624. Among the achievements of the Empretec network in 2020, the following had a particular relevance at the global or country level:

- (a) The 2020 Empretec Women in Business Award ceremony as a satellite event of UNCTAD's flagship World Investment Forum;
- (b) The annual Empretec Directors meeting;
- (c) A regional meeting of Latin American Empretec centres to share experiences of assistance to entrepreneurs during the pandemic;
- (d) An Empretec Master Class and a Training-of-Trainers (TOT) workshop (in-person format) in Nigeria for Empretec trainers from various African countries;
- (e) Integration workshops for Empretec trainers and trainee trainers in the Russian Federation (2 sessions) and Saudi Arabia (3 sessions);
- (f) Consolidation workshops for Empretec trainers and trainee trainers in Angola (3 sessions)
- (g) Follow-up workshops with certified Empretec trainers who attended in-person regional and international TOTs (one session for Africa and one for Latin America);
- (h) Online TOTs for Empretec trainers and trainee trainers to train trainers on the new version of the Empretec workshop – E6DM (7 sessions);
- (i) A series of 10 Empretec live sessions (webinars) with former Empretec graduates, organized in collaboration with Empretec centres in 10 different countries to identify and share success stories of empretecos on COVID 19 environment;
- (j) Development of online tools that could be used in future Empretec formats; and
- (k) Revision and standardization of training materials on Empretec for groups of entrepreneurs with low-literacy and numeracy skills, and on farming as a business.

625. More specifically the following activities were conducted:

Empretec global network activities

626. The 2020 Empretec Women in Business Award (E-WBA) was held virtually on 10 December 2020, as a satellite event of the UNCTAD World Investment Forum. The main theme of the 2020 edition was "Resilience – women entrepreneurs' response to the

current COVID-19 crisis". The award was won by a Jordanian technology entrepreneur.⁸² In recognition of women entrepreneurs' contribution to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, UNCTAD introduced three special category awards – circular economy, sustainable agriculture, and inclusive business – that went to entrepreneurs from Argentina, Ecuador and Uganda.

627. Directors of the Empretec centres, coordinators and international trainers from 23 countries met virtually in April 2020 to discuss strategies and measures to cope with the global pandemic and the restrictions affecting regular operations of Empretec centres all around the world. Participants shared challenges in their respective countries and provided examples of how virtual tools were facilitating their activities in support of local entrepreneurs and MSMEs, including former Empretec graduates, as well as attracting new participants for future workshops. Participants discussed the use of virtual meeting platforms to conduct coaching and reinforcement sessions as well as a more intensive use of social media. The latter were mainly used to publicize e-learning activities and provide online support services, such as "live" sessions and "chats" with experienced Empretec facilitators, and motivational videos. UNCTAD gathered best practices and suggestions on short-term and future developments, including the possibility of forming a task force to discuss the development of new online tools that could complement the standard in-person Empretec workshops.

628. In the context of the MSME surge project, UNCTAD supported its network of Empretec centres and their trainers to strengthen their response to assist SMEs, including through: the introduction of a revised version of the Empretec training materials reflecting recent trends in business training, training-of-trainers workshops, refresher sessions, upgrading of trainer certification tools and follow-up activities with Empretec participants to strengthen their learning through the assessment of their personal improvement plans. Between April and December 2020, UNCTAD organized 10 online TOTs for a total of 86 hours. Some 160 Empretec trainers from 25 countries from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East attended the sessions. Assessment questionnaires filled in by participants showed an overall appreciation of content, duration, and format of the sessions. The modules incorporating new tools, such as Design Thinking and the Business Model Canvas, were much appreciated by participants. They also valued new concepts such as eco-innovation and sustainability embedded in business modelling and appreciated the opportunity to revise the selection process and receive guidance on how to validate behaviours shown by participants.

629. In coordination with national counterparts hosting national Empretec programmes, UNCTAD organized a series of 10 "Empretec Live Sessions". The webinars touched upon the main challenges that entrepreneurs face and presented the entrepreneurs' creative solutions to demonstrate how their behaviour was a key asset for success and growth regardless of the economic and social environment in post COVID-19 resurgence.

630. Two online sessions on the "Empretec 21-day meeting" were organized in November 2020 for two groups of 35 Empretec trainers, respectively from seven African countries, seven Latin American countries and Romania. The sessions provided participants with an opportunity to learn how to effectively organize and conduct a meeting with empretecos, with a view to broadening existing networks of Empretec graduates and strengthening ties among them.

Empretec activities at a national and regional levels

631. The following section provides some highlights on centres in the installation phase and more details about promising initiatives undertaken by some centres per region or geographic areas.

Empretec in Asia

632. Empretec India Foundation established several key partnerships that strengthened its business development services and relations with the media to promote HiEERAs

⁸² See <https://unctad.org/news/jordanian-woman-techpreneur-scoops-un-business-award>.

(High-Impact Entrepreneurs from Emerging Regions for Action) and help them better integrate into the local, regional and global industry value chains. The project implementation will start in 2021.

633. The Empretec counterpart in Jordan (Business Development Centre - BDC) expanded the Empretec national programme to reach youth in different Jordanian governorates and vulnerable areas, with a view to supporting the culture of self-employment. In this respect, BDC initiated “Inhad” - a one-stop national programme that features workshops on Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship and Ideation, Entrepreneurship Capacity-Building of Entrepreneurial Competencies, Business Planning and Business Canvas. Training activities are complemented by technical support in preparing a feasibility study.

634. UNCTAD and the Social Development Bank of Saudi Arabia conducted a selection process of national agencies that expressed interest to act as a local implementing partner that would provide services for the implementation of the Empretec programme in Saudi Arabia. The overall objective of the project is to complete the installation of Empretec in Saudi Arabia, through a year plan of activities that consists of 40 Empretec workshops to be delivered throughout the country, and 18 training-of-trainers workshops aiming at certifying 20 local trainers (10 men and 10 women) as UNCTAD-Empretec National Trainers. Five Saudi trainers participated in three online “integration workshops” between April and July 2020, led by international master trainers from Brazil, Jordan and the State of Palestine. The focus of integration workshops is to build the capacity of local facilitators and trainers, particularly as it relates to theoretical aspects behind the Empretec methodology.

Empretec country activities in Africa

635. UNCTAD continued to provide assistance on the implementation Empretec Angola and conducted three online TOT sessions. In addition, UNCTAD organized, in coordination with the team of Angolan trainers, an interactive debate, moderated by experienced Empretec facilitators and featuring the participation of some successful local entrepreneurs and former Empretec graduates (empretecos) who told their business stories and shared their experience of running their businesses through the unpredictable and uncertain times of the global pandemic.

636. UNCTAD and Empretec Nigeria Foundation jointly organized an in-person six-day Empretec Entrepreneurship Training Workshop (Empretec Master Class) and a five-day Regional Training of Trainers in February. Both events aimed at providing African centres and trainers with an opportunity to observe an Entrepreneurship Training Workshop in its 6DM (or “modernized”) format⁸³ and to obtain insight on new tools and modules. Seventeen trainers from eight African Empretec centres attended the workshop as observers. Twenty-one trainers then participated in the regional TOT, during which they interacted through a mix of group activities and discussions. All trainers benefited from hands-on experience on new tools and modules, thus getting ready for the roll-out of the Empretec workshop in the new format in their respective countries.

Empretec country activities in Latin America

637. Empretec Argentina designed a large training programme for different audiences. From April to June 2020, more than 350 empretecos participated in virtual meetings to practice the Empretec’s 10 Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies, focusing on how to

⁸³ The new format was developed in Brazil by the national Empretec counterpart (SEBRAE) in 2018 to respond to changes and new demands in the area of entrepreneurship skills facilitation. After a series of country-wide tests to validate its impact, it has been adopted by SEBRAE as the new ETW (6DM). The methodology was shared with UNCTAD and an international consultative workshop was organized jointly by UNCTAD and SEBRAE to assess the applicability of the new methodology to the entire Empretec network. The workshop was attended by 12 lead trainers from 11 Empretec centres who unanimously supported the adoption of the modernized Empretec methodology. As a follow-up, UNCTAD organized a regional workshop for lead trainers from the Empretec centers in Latin America in Bogotá (2019), attended by 19 trainers from 6 countries.

effectively use them to cope with challenges and obstacles posed by pandemic. In June, Empretec Argentina developed a series of free virtual training events on various topics: sustainability, inclusive business, and costs management. Additional training programmes were developed, in partnership with the National Bank of Argentina and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, to assist local MSMEs on access to finance and entrepreneurs on the internationalization of their companies.

638. The Empretec centre in Colombia conducted its first Empretec workshop with the new 6DM format in virtual mode. The workshop was attended by 23 entrepreneurs.

Empretec country activities in the Russian Federation

639. Four Empretec trainers attended an “integration workshop” organized by UNCTAD and led by Empretec international master trainers from Brazil during two sessions held in August 2020. The workshop was designed to prepare the Russian team of trainers to roll out the new format of the Empretec workshop (6DM).

Business Linkages

640. Funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), a SECO–United Nations Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity project in Myanmar saw its implementation negatively impacted by the pandemic. Consequently, in-person capacity-building activities with national implementing partners and Farming-as-a-Business (FaaB) training with selected groups of farmers in the three value chains (tea, ginger and avocado), selected by the project, were postponed. With a view to advancing on the preparation of the training material required to implement field activities with smallholder farmers and producers, UNCTAD, with the help of an international expert and a local agricultural expert, adapted, customized and translated existing FaaB training material from English to Burmese.

641. **Results and impact.** The leading role of UNCTAD was reaffirmed in 2020 in United Nations General Assembly resolution 75/211, both in the area of entrepreneurship education and dissemination of entrepreneurial thinking, through the Empretec programme (paragraph 17), and in the area of support and assistance to member States on entrepreneurship policy and MSME promotion (paragraph 32).

642. The relevance of UNCTAD work on entrepreneurship policies is attested by a steady growth of requests of assistance from member States.

643. The UNCTAD-UNITAR e-learning course on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees went through two iterations in 2020, with almost 1,000 participants from over 90 countries who enrolled in the course, and over 500 who completed it. More than 50 per cent of participants were women and more than 20 per cent were government representatives. Exit surveys indicate that over 90 per cent of respondents found the e-learning course extremely useful and expected to use the acquired knowledge in their professional work.

644. The United Nations MSME Day 2020 was very popular with over 2,000 viewers representing all developing regions of the world. It was also very closely followed through social media channels, where 6,576 people engaged on the topic on Twitter and 1,996 people through Facebook. Almost 500 people were connected through Webex at the peak of the virtual event, which was also broadcasted by United Nations TV. Three hundred forty-eight people watched the event through United Nations TV and 1,689 people on Youtube.

645. From January to September 2020, 4,083 people registered for the Empretec Jordan “Inhad” programme, participating in 17 workshops in different areas of the country. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 365 young people received technical support in preparing feasibility studies, 43 were funded directly by the banks and 257 found direct job opportunities. Facebook, in partnership with Empretec Jordan – Business Development Centre, launched the “Boost with Facebook” global programme designed to equip small and medium-size businesses with the digital marketing skills they need to grow their presence online and compete in the digital economy. Under the

patronage of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply of Jordan, the programme is envisaged to train around 1,000 SMEs across the country to support their economic recovery.

646. The 2020 Empretec Women in Business Awards was followed by 175 participants through a virtual platform. The event was also broadcasted on United Nations TV (web streaming) and the ceremony was followed by 1,387 viewers across multiple platforms. Over 1,200 viewers watched the virtual ceremony on UNCTAD Facebook Live, and over 500 viewers on Empretec's Youtube Live channel. The event generated significant attention on social media reaching over 10,000 people on Facebook and igniting over 5,000 impressions on Twitter on the day of the event. Soon after the Awards, a winner from Uganda was given a grant of over US\$4.0 million to install a fruit factory. In addition, the Government has committed to connect hydropower to her farm and also to tarmac a 51 km road to the factory. The government also wishes to co-invest in her business by injecting a further US\$6.0 million to support marketing the products abroad and in addressing quality aspects of operations.

D6 Train for Trade

Table D6
Train for Trade

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
INT/OT/4AB	Mise en place d'un projet de renforcement des capacités de formation portuaire pour les pays en développement (Programme Train for Trade)	2004–	Developing country ports
INT/OT/5BS	Coopération entre l'Autorité Portuaire de Valence (Espagne) et le programme Train for Trade de la CNUCED	2005–	Valencia port authority
INT/OT/6AR	Train for Trade Trust Fund	2006–	Multi-donor
INT/OT/7BR	UNCTAD/ Train for Trade Port Training Programme for English-Speaking Developing Countries	2007–	Ireland
ROA-1617 (A10)	Programme on Statistics and Data	2016–	Development Account
ROA-1819 (N11)	Leapfrogging skills development in e-Commerce in South-East Asia in the Framework of the 2030 Development Agenda	2018–	Development Account
ROA-2023 (X12)	Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics	2020–	Development Account

647. **Development context.** With a view to supporting the development of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, the UNCTAD Train for Trade Programme proposes tailored technical assistance to best meet countries' needs in key areas pertinent to trade. The programme aims to develop local capacities, knowledge and skills to empower countries to reap the benefits of international trade. The programme promotes national ownership, supports South–South and triangular cooperation and leads to poverty reduction. Specifically, the programme helps developing countries in building sustainable networks of knowledge, developing trade-oriented policies and promoting ICT solutions and innovative thinking to enhance the capacities of international trade players and reduce poverty. In

recent years, the Train for Trade programme has enlarged its scope in terms of geographic coverage and themes. The programme comprises 3 main components:

- (a) E-commerce, including issues such as the legal aspects of e-commerce, digital identity for trade and development and e-commerce best practices;
- (b) Trade statistics, including statistics on international trade in services (SITS) and on international merchandise trade statistics (IMTS);
- (c) Port Management Programme.

648. The Train for Trade programme with its extensive experience on blended learning has contributed to a publication on “Blended learning methodologies for capacity development” by the economic and social entities of the United Nations Secretariat and supported the Development Account Management Team in the organization of a series of e-learning webinars following the presentation of this publication to help the implementing entities of United Nations Development Account adopt an online or hybrid approach for technical cooperation. These innovative ways of delivery are particularly important for implementing technical cooperation activities in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The Train for Trade team also contributed to many online events (such as webinars) organised by different stakeholders in the fields of e-learning methodologies, port management, and climate change effects on port activities.

649. The Train for Trade Port Management Programme (PMP) plays a vital role in supporting port communities in developing countries in quest for efficient and competitive port management. In many developing countries, ports play a key role in connecting them to international trade. Furthermore, 80 per cent of international trade is channelled through ports (this percentage is even higher in LDCs). Hence, the way the maritime sector is organized has a profound impact on trade volumes and transport costs and is therefore decisive for a country’s competitiveness. Since the trade and maritime transport sectors are subject to constant regulatory changes, it is paramount that port officials are able to grasp the growing complexities of port management.

650. The activities of the Train for Trade programme in 2020 have contributed to various Sustainable Development Goals, including

- (a) Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) by actively promoting women participation in all programme activities;
- (b) Goal 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) by identifying best practices through research activities and promoting behaviour changes. A case study in Johor Port Berhad (JPB), Malaysia delivers a rainwater harvesting system which will reduce the demand on the potable water supply by more than 9 million litres annually and encourage a self-sufficient, sustainable management system. Sustainable Development Goal 6 indicator 6.4.1 calls for a change in water use efficiency over time. This change is already happening in JPB. Implementing the recommendations proposed is also having an impact on reducing CO₂ levels by providing sufficient irrigation water for many thousands of plants and trees that absorb carbon from the atmosphere.
- (c) Goal 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) by providing sustainable and comprehensive training, capacity-building and knowledge exchange programme. One port terminal in the Philippines, Manila Port Harbour, has introduced automatic spreaders to handle containers to increase productivity and improve the working conditions of dockworkers. Figures show there has been a 90 per cent decrease in non-fatal accidents involving workers caught in tackle and that productivity increased by 45 per cent on the container handling area. The improvement of the health and safety of workers is a key target of Sustainable Development Goal 8 for “workers exposed to undue risks”. Additionally, by providing specialist training for operatives, their skills and safety consciousness will increase and thereby improve their opportunities to benefit from better economic conditions along with the business.
- (d) Goal 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation) by encouraging port communities to implement

proposals for corrective actions and innovations contained in Port Management Programme participants' dissertations. Another case study in Johor Port Berhad, Malaysia is a practical example showing how innovation and technology can drive important environmental gains. Efficient transportation services are key drivers of economic development and maritime transport is a critical enabler of trade. The volume of seaborne trade in the seas around Johor and Singapore are increasing year-on-year. Increasing the reliability of Vessel Traffic Systems (VTS) within the area controlled by Johor Port Authority, Malaysia will ensure that the port has the technical infrastructure to grow capacity in a safe and secure manner. The proposed state-of-the-art VTS which will operate on 24 hours a day basis will help prevent vessel accidents at sea which result in devastating damage to human and marine life.

(e) Goal 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable) by developing city-port environmental policies). In the West Aceh area of Sumatra, Indonesia lies the small port of Meulaboh. Here a project is in hand to use ships to transport thousands of tonnes of produce currently moved by lorries. This has the potential to significantly reduce green-house gas emissions in villages of the region. The particulates from burning hydrocarbons are responsible for air pollution and damage the health of citizens. Reducing diesel fumes from heavy goods vehicles will lead to an improved environment and a better health outlook for citizens affected by airborne pollutants. There is likely to be a significant decline in road injuries and fatalities as the number of lorries on the roads is reduced substantially.

(f) Goal 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts); a case study, "Reducing environmental impact by installing a photovoltaic plant in TDD", defended in October 2016 before an international jury of port experts. The objective of the research was to implement a photovoltaic plant at the Don Diego Colón Terminal of the Port of Sansoucí (Santo Domingo), to generate electricity in an environmentally friendly manner with savings in energy consumption costs. The Sansoucí Ports Investment Board approved the proposed installation of the photovoltaic plant in March 2017, with an investment of around US\$280,000. In April 2018, work began with the installation of the solar panels and, since June 2018, the photovoltaic plant started to generate energy. Since September 2018, the contribution of the photovoltaic plant to the improvement of the quality of the services generated in the TDD, the injection of clean energy and an increase of the efficiency of operating costs through the reduction of the energy consumption of the terminal have been perceived. All these positive factors have achieved the port's mission objectives, including being aligned with the continuous improvement and preservation of the environment.

(g) Goal 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) by raising awareness of challenges for sustainable ports, including circular economy, air quality, environmental impact, green bank investment, decarbonization, climate change, and so on. In the port of Takoradi, Ghana, a project is being implemented which will eliminate oil pollution in the soil and waterways and recycle more than 40,000 litres of waste lubricating oil. Green port policies are beneficial to climate action and in this case study the recommended actions involve managing all waste lubricating oils from vessels and from port operations in compliance with ISO Environmental Standards and regulations of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The project includes new steps to regulate the activities of licensed waste contractors. These actions will result in 40,000 tonnes of hazardous waste oils being treated in accordance with best international standards and remove the threat of any on this product entering the soil of waterways and polluting them. It also means that properly treated product can be recycled and reused for future generations. This will lead to a safer and cleaner marine environment.

(h) Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels); and

(i) Goal 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) by building global partnership and consensus.

651. **Objective/features.** The Train for Trade programme contributes to work for development-led globalization, where the development paths are sustainable and inclusive, by disseminating international trade-related knowledge and developing skills and capacities. Train for Trade has proven to be very useful and instrumental in connecting UNCTAD research and analysis with sustainable capacity-building activities in developing and transition countries. Train for Trade activities help to facilitate South–South and North–South collaboration and foster communication between trade and training experts. The UNCTAD Train for Trade methodology includes training of trainers, coaching and blended learning. It provides the countries with a public–private partnership model, sustainable training and capacity-building, talent management scheme and systematic methodology combining blended learning and digital technology.

652. The PMP brings together public, private and international entities to share expertise and best practices. Talent management and leadership development is a crucial part of the programme. The PMP operates through three language-based networks (English, French and Spanish) in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. The programme also hosts the high-end course on modern port management, which entails a powerful scheme to induce value added solutions in port communities and performance measurement indicators.

653. Partnerships have been established with European ports to share their knowledge and expertise with ports in the South. Annual regional meetings bring together port officials from different countries, promoting sharing of experiences and expertise. South-South collaboration between port communities is promoted as it is crucial for knowledge sharing. For example, exchange of participants is encouraged in order to increase participants' exposure to different port set-ups, as well as to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, the beneficiary ports of the Port Management Programme (Argentina, Benin, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cameroon, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Mauritania, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania) continued to contribute financially to the programme, including contributions to the Trust Fund. This self-sustaining aspect indicates the level of commitment and interest from the national port communities (public–private partnerships). Partnerships and synergies have also been established with regional organizations, namely the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)); and with international organizations, including UNSD, UNCITRAL, UNESCAP, UNECLAC and WTO. Moreover, the Train for Trade programme collaborates with UNCTAD divisions/programmes according to the mandate/themes and requests from beneficiaries.

654. The PMP also offers training-of-trainer courses and coaching sessions in order to support capacity development of the port managers as instructors. The Modern Port Management course targets middle and senior managers and consists of 240 hours of training activities, which are divided into eight modules and delivered over a two-year span. The eight modules of the Modern Port Management course are:

- (a) International trade and transport;
- (b) Organization of a port system;
- (c) Functioning of a port system;
- (d) Challenges of sustainable ports;
- (e) Methods and tools of port management;
- (f) Economic, commercial and financial management;
- (g) Administrative and legal management;
- (h) Technical management and human resources development.

655. To obtain the UNCTAD Certificate in Modern Port Management, participants must complete each module and defend a dissertation. Many former participants in the Modern

Port Management programme become instructors and take more responsibility at the senior management level, thereby multiplying the effects of the programme. Other indicators of the effectiveness of the programme in the field are the validation of the quality of participant's dissertation by international and regional port experts, and the relevance of the dissertations (about 150 each year) to improve services in the port community.

656. **Outputs.** Under the Port Management Programme, the key outputs of the French-, English- and Spanish-speaking networks during the reporting period are highlighted below. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the international exchanges were conducted online in 2020. Thanks to the Train for Trade strategy and experience with blended learning and with the support of certified local trainers, the programme was able to deliver the courses locally and to limit the impact of travel restriction on the programme.

657. With the support of the United Nations Development Account and following the requests from port members of the Port Management Programme, a new special training and capacity-building package called "Building Port Resilience Against Pandemics" (BPR) was developed to build essential skills for port community managers to help protect people and secure vital trade in ports. Twenty-one port experts took part in the design phase, commonly called Design a Curriculum (DACUM) according to the Train for Trade methodology, to brainstorm on the subject of the new course and to define the objectives, content, target population and course outline. The three DACUM sessions were conducted online. The new BPR package will be made available to port communities around the world in English, French and Spanish. The project also included the exchange of best practices and new safety standards, and a dedicated webpage on the Train for Trade platform was developed to provide information on port responsiveness against the pandemic including best practices, recommendations, crisis protocols and reference documents in English, French and Spanish.

658. *French-speaking network.* In 2020, the French-speaking network of the Port Management Programme was composed of the port communities of Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo.

659. In the French-speaking network, 4 exchanges of port instructors were organized (conducted online because of the pandemic) involving Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea and Togo, which contributed to South-South cooperation.

660. A Train for Trade mission was organized in Nantes, France, to meet with the new Chief Executive Officer of the Nantes Saint-Nazaire Port Authority to discuss the workplan of the French-speaking network activities.

661. Virtual meetings with focal points of the French-speaking network for the organisation of online national deliveries and juries were organized for Senegal.

662. Benin and Senegal completed their 14th and 12th cycles, respectively, with panels of port experts (in person and online). These events gathered a total of 38 experts from other countries from the network to assess the final work (called dissertations) of participants and to award the Port Certificate upon successful results. The dissertation jury took place in Benin in February 2020, with representatives from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Haiti, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo. A total of 22 staff (7 women) from the port community of Cotonou were awarded the certificate. In Senegal, the juries for the 16 ports' operators (7 women) of the 12th cycle were organized fully online with strong participation from other ports of the network. Twenty-three representatives were connected by videoconference. The event spread over a period of two weeks, with two panels per day. All candidates were awarded with the certificate. The participation of port experts from beneficiary countries further contributed to the South-South exchange of knowledge and expertise.

663. *English-speaking network.* The English-speaking network continued to benefit from financial contributions of Irish Aid and the collaboration of Irish ports, namely Port of Cork Company (PoCC), Dublin Port Company (DPC) and Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC), as well as the Port Authority of Valencia (PAV) in Spain.

664. *Ghana.* In cooperation with Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA), 20 middle managers (including 5 women) from the port communities of Ghana covering the

ports of Tema and Takoradi enrolled in the cycle 5 of the UNCTAD Port Management Programme took part in the Module 5, entitled “Methods and tools of Port Management”, from 24 to 28 February 2020.

665. *Philippines*. In cooperation with the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), 21 middle managers (including 10 women) from the port communities of the Philippines enrolled in the cycle 3 of UNCTAD Port Management Programme took part in the delivery of the Module 8, entitled “Technical Management and Human resources Development”, from 3 to 7 February 2020. Mock juries for the participants were also organized in December 2020 and January 2021 to assess the preparation of their case studies related to port management issues.

666. *United Republic of Tanzania*. As a former member of the UNCTAD Port Management Programme from 2007 to 2013, Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA) has expressed the interest to return to the programme. Several meetings were organised with the new management team to define the steps to be taken to resume the activities and rebuild a pool of national instructors in the port community of Dar Es Salaam.

667. Discussions have been initiated with the Danube Commission regarding the Train for Trade Port Management Programme English-speaking Network and future potential for capacity-building activities related to the river ports of their 11 member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine). Participation of selected representatives will be included during future training of trainer’s events.

668. *Spanish-speaking network*. The Spanish-speaking network benefits from the collaboration of ports of Spanish ports by means of a memorandum of understanding with Puertos del Estado. The Port Authority of Valencia also gives financial and in-kind contribution to the programme through a memorandum of understanding, and the Port Authority of Gijon provides in-kind contribution.

669. The third cycle of the programme in Argentina was launched further to the official mission of the Port Authority of Valencia and UNCTAD. The national capacities have been strengthened with the incorporation of new port communities in the programme.

670. The national deliveries of the Modern Port Management course were organized through hybrid mode. The senior and middle port managers of port communities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia attended modules 4 to 8 of the second cycle; the Dominican Republic delivered modules 5 to 8 the fourth cycle; the port communities in Peru participated in modules 5 to 8 of the sixth cycle of the course, and port communities in Argentina attended modules 1 and 2 of the third cycle. All the modules were delivered by international experts and local instructors (certified by Train for Trade).

671. The International Coordination Meeting of the Spanish-speaking network was organized online on 7 December 2020 with the participation of representatives of the member countries, the Spanish Port Authorities of Valencia and Gijon and UNCTAD. The purpose of the meeting was to assess the results of the cycles and to evaluate the scope of strengthening and expanding the programme. The meeting highlighted the rapid response of the programme to enable the continuation of the national activities through hybrid mode during the pandemic crisis. Furthermore, the meeting acknowledged the positive impact of the activities implemented for networking, exchange of information, experiences, and good practices among others. Representatives of the Spanish Speaking network agreed on a draft workplan for 2021 and to continue financing their membership. As from 2021, Dominican Republic’s contribution will be made by two port entities.

672. The National Port Authority (APN) and the International Terminal of the South (TISUR) organized the “Basic course of management of innovative ports” in online modality through the Virtual Port Campus of the APN. The course was attended by representatives of the port communities of the southern region of Peru, and it was delivered by national instructors certified by UNCTAD.

673. In 2020, South–South cooperation was carried out with the participation of port experts from the Spanish-speaking network. It allowed countries to share and develop

knowledge, skills, best practices, awareness on different topics and to reinforce the network's capability to respond to common challenges.

674. The volume 8 of the UNCTAD Train for Trade Port Management Series (PMS) was published featuring fifteen dissertations, which have been judged to be the best from the recent cycles of the English-speaking network of the Port Management Programme. The publication links the recommendations to directly relevant Sustainable Development Goals, including their targets and indicators, and informs of their implementation status. Two webinars were organized with 233 participants (83 women) for the official launch of the PMS vol. 8 publication featuring best case studies and supporting messages from the Chief Executive Officers of the ports in which the recommendations were implemented. The Director of Irish Aid (main donor) also praised the success in implementation of the programme in various port communities. The video recording of the online event was also watched by more than 1,400 viewers.

675. The Train for Trade Port Performance Scorecard (PPS) was updated, and the outcomes reflected in PPS's newsletter No. 4. Selected results of the PPS were also included in chapter 3 "Performance Indicators" of the UNCTAD *Review of Maritime Transport 2020*. The main objective of PPS is to provide members of the programme with a useful tool allowing performance benchmarking and port and regional comparison on a yearly basis.

676. In addition to the Port Management Programme, TFT in collaboration with WTO, UNSD and the Development Statistics and Information Branch of UNCTAD delivered two online courses on statistics in English and French in 2020. Train for Trade has trained 2,234 statisticians (1,020 women) from 173 countries or areas. At the end of the courses, statisticians said that these courses would improve the collection and the reporting of statistics in many countries. Policymakers who followed the course said that now they had a better understanding of the statistical reports, which would be taken into consideration in decision-making process.

677. The French-speaking version of the course on Statistics on International Trade in Services (SITS) was completed in February 2020, including the video recording and multimedia elements.

678. The online course on SITS was delivered (from September to October 2020 in English and French at the same time) for 769 participants (326 women). The course was followed by three webinars (two in English and one in French to increase the outreach and to accommodate for different time-zones) in December 2020 to identify best practices and policy recommendations. The webinars were attended by 218 statisticians (93 women).

679. The online course on International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) was delivered in English from March to April 2020 with 948 participants (504 women) and in French from June to July 2020 with 299 participants (97 women).

680. The publication Practice on E-commerce – Train for Trade case studies in South-East Asia was launched through a webinar in June 2020. It showcases national case studies in selected countries from South-East Asia and related policy recommendations. There was a total of 123 registered participants (57 women) from 23 countries around the world. The event was also streamed through the Facebook platform and had been viewed by about 1,500 people by 2 July 2020. The publication Digital Identity for Trade and Development showcasing national case studies and relevant recommendations in selected countries in South-East Asia was published in November 2020.

681. **Results/impact.** In 2020, the Train for Trade enhanced skills and abilities of about 2932 trade practitioners⁸⁴ (1264 women) from 177 countries and areas through various courses and activities. It is summarized in the table below.

⁸⁴ If a person participated in more than one training programme in 2020, each participation is counted separately.

Number of trade practitioners who enhanced their skills and expertise through various courses and activities in 2020

<i>Area</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Women</i>
Port Management Programme	575	187
French-speaking network	166	58
English-speaking network	304	107
Spanish-speaking network	105	22
Statistics on International Trade in Services blended learning course	987	419
eLearning course	769	326
English	596	280
French	173	46
Webinar	218	93
English	169	83
French	49	10
International Merchandise Trade Statistics online course	1247	601
English	948	504
French	299	97
E-commerce Best Practices Webinar	123	57

682. In 2020, the participants of the Port Management Programme prepared a total of 150 dissertations with proposals of improvements to the port communities, which were positively evaluated by local and international subject matter experts. These proposals will have big chance of being implemented by the port authorities.

683. The exchange of port network instructors is an excellent example of South-South cooperation supported by the UNCTAD Train for Trade Port Management Programme. These exchanges allow sharing of knowledge and port practices between countries of the region, which often share common issues.

684. Based on the work initiated by the UNCTAD Advisory Group during its twelfth ad hoc expert meeting on “Future Challenges for Port Managers”, held on 11–12 November 2019 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, the development of the new Module 4 of the Modern Port Management course has progressed during the year 2020. The new module 4 is entitled “Challenges of Sustainable Ports” and includes new themes in line with current concerns and relevant Sustainable Development Goals (climate change and the environment, safety, quality, security, corporate social integration and emerging trends and future proofing).

685. Based on the balanced scorecard concept, 26 indicators were identified, collected and classified into six main categories since 2010: finance, human resources, gender, vessel operations, cargo operations and environment under the Train for Trade Port Performance Scorecard. The global average is calculated based on a five-year rolling back average. The resulting statistics are being used by port communities to help with strategic planning and yearly based performance benchmarking on a regional and global scales.

686. The webinar-style launch of volume 8 of the Port Management Series organized in June 2020 presented the best case studies from the English-speaking network of the Port Management Programme. Port managers were encouraged to seek opportunities to implement the case study material prepared by successful candidates from the Port

Management Programme. More than 1,400 people have watched the recorded videos of the two online sessions of the launch on the UNCTAD Facebook page.

687. Over 2900 participants benefited from training and capacity-building activities under the banner of the Train for Trade programme relating to trade statistics, e-commerce and port management. Thanks to the blended-learning strategy embedded in the programme since its inception, the activities were not halted due to the pandemic in 2020. Thanks to the sudden boost of digital tools and the fact that the majority of trade actors started to use more and more new technologies to communicate (Teams, Zoom, WebEx, Social Apps, etc.), the scope of the programme has been extended to cover a total of 177 countries or areas across the globe. The Train for Trade platforms have been further developed to cater for larger number of participants and to capture real-time statistics of the events and link them up with the results- based management (RBM) indicators of the programme (80 per cent success rate and 87 per cent satisfaction rate globally). New features have been incorporated into the Learning and Content Management System (LMS) under Moodle open source. The Train for Trade public website has also been improved, with contributions to social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn @trainfortrade), and multimedia material illustrating the impact of the programme in member states and providing them with powerful tools and knowledge on trade policies to absorb the economic shock of the pandemic and build back better.

D99 Other

Table D99

Others

<i>Project number</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Period covered</i>	<i>Source of fund</i>
<i>Division on Globalization and Development Strategies</i>			
INT/0T/6AP	Trust Fund for the UNCTAD Virtual Institute on Trade and Development	2006–	Multi-donor
<i>Resource Management Service</i>			
INT/0T/1AK	Financing of participation of Experts from Developing Countries and Countries with economies in transition in UNCTAD Expert Group Meetings	2001–	Multi-donor

1. Management and coordination

Financing of experts for UNCTAD expert meetings

688. The trust fund for the financing of experts attending UNCTAD expert meetings was used to finance the travel of one expert from a developing country to participate in the multi-year expert meeting held in Geneva in February 2020. Due to the pandemic, all other multi-year expert meetings were held virtually, therefore the trust fund was not used to finance the travel of experts to those meetings from March to December 2020.

2. Virtual Institute

689. **Development context.** The capacities of developing countries to undertake economic analysis, formulate national policies and implement them to achieve their development objectives is lacking in many respects. Universities and research centres can play an essential role in building such capacities, as they educate future decision-makers and can provide analytical inputs to inform their Governments' economic policy decisions.

690. **Objectives and features.** The Virtual Institute is the UNCTAD programme of support to academia. Its ultimate objective is to help developing countries design evidence-

based policies that result in inclusive and sustainable development. To this end, the Virtual Institute offers capacity-building opportunities to academics and researchers so that they may prepare qualified decision-makers and provide analyses to underpin the formulation of economic policies in their countries.

691. **Outputs.** 2020 has been a rather challenging year for everyone, including the Virtual Institute. We have encountered some challenges on human resources, including the departure of two of our consultants, both of which are responsible for web management, due to financial constraints, hence could not really use the opportunity to use the web platform to offer online classes or publish other capacity-building materials. However, despite the challenges, the Virtual Institute continued to provide its member institutions with services mainly in two areas: (a) professional development for academics and (b) facilitation of cooperation among the members of its academic network and dissemination of UNCTAD research to the academic community.

692. The Virtual Institute continued its capacity-building efforts in 2020. The Virtual Institute organized two videoconferences for the Institute of Business Administration (Pakistan), and one virtual study tour for the University of West Indies (Barbados). Additionally, the Virtual Institute has organized a seminar for the School of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran on post-COVID-19 trade policies, and sustainable development. In 2020, the Virtual Institute organized a summer school titled “From the Transformation of Economics to Economic Transformation: Pathways to a Better Future” during 15–23 August 2020. Due to COVID circumstances, the school was offered virtually, and had more than 800 participants from all over the world.

693. In 2021, we hope that we will have increased capacity in terms of staffing, and hence will offer the online course on a Global Green New Deal through the Virtual Institute platform along with other online classes and increase our capacity to disseminate the work of UNCTAD and will have better outreach to our member states in terms of supporting them in technical issues.

694. **Results.** The Virtual Institute contributed to enhanced teaching and research on trade and development issues at member institutions and increased policy orientation of their work by providing support for the development of both individual and institutional capacities in this area. The multiplier effect of, videoconferences and study tours, as well as the distribution of UNCTAD publications embedded the organization’s research and perspective in graduate programmes at numerous universities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

3. Course on key issues on the international economic agenda – paragraph 166

695. **Development context.** Paragraph 166 of the Bangkok Plan of Action was adopted at the tenth session of the UNCTAD Ministerial Conference, in which it called on UNCTAD to strengthen its capacity-building activities, particularly in providing training courses on key trade and development matters to policymakers across developing countries. The paragraph also underlines that these training courses would draw on the expertise and policy analysis work of the UNCTAD secretariat. This mandate was renewed by the São Paulo Consensus, the Accra Accord and the Doha Declaration, and reaffirmed in Nairobi in 2016 at UNCTAD XIV.

696. The UNCTAD paragraph 166 programme delivers the courses on economic development and trade-related, matters. It delivers the short courses (half-day) for Geneva-based delegates and regional courses for the five developing regions. The beneficiaries are mainly mid-level government officials working at relevant public institutions; however, academics at times are considered for participation. The programme also coordinates and works closely with the permanent missions to the United Nation based in Geneva over the processes involved for the short courses and regional courses. For instance, the UNCTAD notifications for regional and short courses are communicated to all relevant permanent missions in Geneva.

697. Furthermore, the current structure of regional courses is inducted in the UNCTAD mandate and is cross-divisional in content. The curricula are designed and developed by

PCBS/P166, in collaboration with the experts from various divisions. During the design phase, collaboration is also sought with the regional economic commissions of the United Nations and with national experts to ensure coherence among the various themes of the economic policy framework. Ranging from economic theories to trade policy, FDI, among other topics, the programme focuses on sustainable development as a central theme. In illustrating how economic policies have an impact, the curricula are integrated and showcase the various models of development.

698. Additionally, the curricula for regional courses in 2020 continued to illustrate the formulation of development policies and strategies, placing them within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. It was further developed to incorporate resilience in response to multiple economic shocks. To mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening the overall framework for development policies with resilience is viewed as an essential component for policymakers to design the overall framework for development policies. The training includes a number of lectures on economic, trade and finance theories and their relevance to policy development, the role of investment and technology, along with detailed case studies and lessons learned from previous policy decisions. It is designed to promote critical thinking, with emphasis placed on policy design, coherence, coordination, implementation and measurement. Central to the course are simulation exercises, examinations, and critiques of best practices in policy development, group work and debates.

699. **Objectives and features.** The overall curricula of the regional course include three modules: a fully integrated and interrelated approach for several substantive topics developed in the research work of UNCTAD. Additionally, it is adapted to each developing region and contributes to enhancing the knowledge and understanding of contemporary economic issues among trade policy officials, finance and investment experts and academics who work in these areas. The curriculum generated for each region focuses on the development of appropriate trade, finance, investment, innovation, and technology policies that are critical to achieve economic gains, which in parallel meets the development objectives of participating countries.

700. Achieving macroeconomic stability, with a sound monetary and fiscal regime, is significant in the design of and support for development objectives. Policymakers are encouraged to consider sound fiscal policies to support such initiatives in a changing global environment. The need to stimulate productive investment, develop local markets and promote diversification will require adopting relevant industrial policies. This also suggests that public investment itself should target increasing human capital and providing infrastructure for development and vice versa. At the same time, developing countries must have sufficient policy space in which they can manoeuvre and advocate for their interests, from a national policy prism. This space should be safeguarded, ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’ while taking part in the global economy.

701. Towards achieving development objectives, the importance of developing a relevant industrial policy is key to the concept of developing and implementing policies for economic growth. For example, the curricula illustrate science and technology impact innovation in agriculture, energy and other areas and their role in providing value added to products that have domestic and international appeal. Remaining competitive, whether in promoting domestic activity or in export-oriented sectors, for example, is crucial to ensuring long-term economic growth. The curricula also focus on the importance of logistics to facilitate trade, to ensure sustainable exports and imports. Trade negotiations, whether at the multilateral, regional or bilateral levels, generate benefits for trade and investment and produce development gains. This area is also an essential part of the course.

702. In 2020, face-to-face and distance learning has been delivered as part of UNCTAD regional and short courses. An e-learning module on the history of UNCTAD continued to be utilized to prepare selected participants ahead of the regional course. The module is divided into four parts, covering comprehensive knowledge on UNCTAD history, its three pillars of work and structure, the role of UNCTAD and other international organizations, and UNCTAD achievements and contributions. The module includes quizzes and a final assessment. Selected participants must successfully complete the final assessment as a prerequisite to the face-to-face sessions scheduled at a later stage in respective host

countries. This module enhances participants' knowledge on UNCTAD and its mandate, including contributions and achievements, preparing the participants for the course work.

703. **Outputs.** In 2020, 25 participants were selected to take part in a regional course for Eastern Europe and other developing countries. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, they all completed the e-learning module on the history of UNCTAD. A total 25 policymakers and academics completed the online course, representing 10 countries, namely Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Among participants, 52 per cent are women.

704. The multi-year venue continued to be an innovative way of raising support, gaining experiences from various economies, and enhancing bilateral cooperation at the country level. The contribution of national experts in shedding light on the national and regional experience is of significance to the programme's curricula in enhancing knowledge and boosting human capital among policymakers. In 2019, three proposals were submitted from Eastern European economies for hosting the course from 2020 to 2024. As a result, the Advisory Body of P166 met on 14 January 2020 and established the Saints Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje as the multi-venue for Eastern Europe's economies: 2020, 2022 and 2024. Due to the global pandemic, the new timetable is 2021, 2023 and 2025. The number of proposals submitted by member states showcase their support to P166/PCBS, UNCTAD flagship programme, both in terms of finance and human resources.

705. The short courses continued to update Geneva-based delegates on recent UNCTAD research on development, economic and trade matters. In cooperation with several UNCTAD divisions, three short editions were offered in the fall of 2020 on the following:

- (a) Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals: the role of diplomats (18 September 2020);
- (b) New instruments, approaches and frameworks in trade policy towards gender equality and women's economic empowerment (13 October 2020);
- (c) Competition and consumer protection policies for inclusive and sustainable development (13 November 2020).

706. A total of 64 delegates from 48 permanent missions participated in these editions. Out of the total number, 48 per cent or 31 participants were women, which is a 5 per cent increase in female representation from the previous year.

707. For the first short course on 18 September, 24 delegates attended, representing Algeria, Bahrain, Cabo Verde, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Haiti, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone and the Syrian Arab Republic.

708. For the second short course on 13 October, 14 delegates attended, representing Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Finland, Haiti, Kenya, Morocco, Panama, the Russian Federation and the State of Palestine.

709. For the third, and last, short course on 13 November, 26 delegates attended, representing Ethiopia, Finland, Haiti, Hungary, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Myanmar, Panama, Turkmenistan and the State of Palestine.

710. The short courses provide a platform where UNCTAD experts are given the opportunity to present their recent research to delegates, while the comments and questions from delegates provide relevant input and potential research topics to UNCTAD work. This informed dialogue between UNCTAD researchers and Geneva-based representatives of member States bridges the knowledge gap and ensures information-sharing. These sessions are on average well attended and provide a forum for delegates and UNCTAD research experts to debate and exchange views. In 2020, the impact of the global pandemic was incorporated in all the themes addressed in the UNCTAD short courses, whether held in hybrid, face-to-face or remote format.

711. **Results and impacts.** Following the completion of the short courses and earlier regional courses, most delegates and participants indicated improved knowledge on development and the related issues addressed during the courses. For previous regional courses, they have noted a deepened understanding of the importance of the role of international trade in improving economic development, including the links between

international economic, social and financial issues. The approach to link theory, policy and practice in economic policy development was highly rated. Its approach to trade, development and investment at the regional and international levels was also useful for the participants.

712. The post evaluations of the regional courses continued to illustrate that participants and their sending departments appreciated the debates on development-related topics and the integrated approach of the programme to ensuring that economic gains benefit development. This is inherent in the design of the curriculum, which treats development from the multiple perspectives of trade, finance, investment and technology. It highlights that the debates and design and implementation of appropriate economic policies can contribute to growth and the development process in general.

713. The Director General of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Papua New Guinea who participated in the forty-third regional course held in Singapore indicated: “The UNCTAD P166 course was structured, and the modules were presented by professionals, who have studied and worked on issues and challenges of countries across the globe. The modules presented on issues relating to macro-economic issues, trade policy and trade facilitation are very important to a developing economy. The knowledge learned will be used to share with other young officers to be aware of some of these issues and challenges. I thank UNCTAD for the opportunity to attend and participate in this course.”

714. To recapitulate, most participants praised the lessons learned from the experiences of other countries and how economic gains can be achieved. Most participants expressed that the curricula had surpassed their expectations, as the courses provide overall knowledge on economic issues and development matters. They also stated that they learned about global economic issues, why economic changes take place and how economies are impacted. Equally important, they indicated they understood how to tackle economic related issues through policy.

715. Following courses held previously, and in an aftermath assessment, several participants in 2020 reported that they were already using the knowledge and tools acquired in their daily work, such as, improvement of economic policy, trade negotiations, policy formulation, strategic planning, attracting FDI, employment creation as well as providing advisory services. Additionally, many noted that the knowledge gained helped them achieve a better understanding of contemporary economic issues, including the essential role of trade agreements in trade negotiations, and how to cope with the challenges of the new multilateral trading system. Several participants indicated their ability to employ analytical tools in the decision-making process in pursuit of relevant development policies to address economic challenges. Many also mentioned the linkages among international trade, finance, investment, technology, and innovation as key pillars of the development strategy. Overall, participants complimented the curricula’s ability to promote debate and highlighted the policy development role-playing exercises as an example of how knowledge could be shared among policymakers, both at the national and regional levels.