



Contributions to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries*

Furthermore, in discussions on its possible contributions to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Committee reiterated its proposal that the Conference adopt the theme “Expanding productive capacity for sustainable development” as the organizing framework for the new programme of action for the least developed countries. It also highlighted the relevance of its findings and recommendations regarding the impact of COVID 19 on least developed countries for the deliberations at the Conference. In addition, the Committee discussed the

importance of developing concrete international support measures for graduating and graduated countries. The Committee commended the work of its secretariat, undertaken in collaboration with partners and in the context of the graduation support facility. That facility is a useful framework for delivering coordinated and dedicated graduation-related capacity development support. The Committee appreciated the timely piloting of such support in the recently graduated country Vanuatu.

The Committee reviewed its possible contributions to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in January 2022. The Committee briefed the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council on its proposed contributions to the Conference and also considered those contributions as relevant to the twelfth Ministerial Conference of WTO and the fifteenth session of UNCTAD.

The Committee underscored the importance of addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in the next programme of action for least developed countries and highlighted the findings and recommendations of its comprehensive study on that topic (see chapter III).

The Committee reiterated its proposal made in 2019 and 2020 regarding an organizing framework for the next programme of action for the least developed countries (see E/2019/33 and E/2020/33). It emphasized once again that the theme “Expanding productive capacity for sustainable development” would enable the least developed countries to design an integrated, coherent and synergistic programme of action and to identify the policy actions needed to overcome persistent binding constraints. As also explained in the Committee’s communiqué¹ on the issue, the COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the value of the proposal.

¹ Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/CDP-PoA-communique.pdf>.

* Excerpt from Committee for Development Policy, Report on the twenty-third session, See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2021, Supplement No. 13 (E/2021/33)

A. Support measures for graduating and graduated countries

The Committee underscored the importance of establishing appropriate international support measures for graduating and graduated countries to ensure that they are able to maintain their development progress, prepare for and manage graduation and build their resilience in order to transition smoothly beyond graduation, which will be even more challenging in the context of COVID-19.

The Committee reiterated the increased urgency of the proposals it had submitted to the Council in 2020, including in relation to:

- (a) Greater access to concessional development finance, including climate finance;
- (b) Fulfilment of ODA commitments;
- (c) Support for leveraging ODA flows to access additional public and private finance;
- (d) Increased coordination with international financial institutions;
- (e) Facilitation of South-South and triangular development cooperation.

The importance of the proposal submitted to the WTO General Council by Chad, the coordinator of the Group of Least Developed Countries in Geneva, on an effective smooth transition mechanism for graduating countries was also highlighted.² The proposal concerned the time-

bound extension of least developed country-specific special and differential treatment and preferential market access in WTO for graduating least developed countries. At the same time, the Committee underscored the need to extend special preferences to graduating least developed countries in regional as well as bilateral trading agreements.

In its support to graduating and graduated countries, the Committee proposed to submit a concrete proposal for an improved monitoring mechanism as an input to the preparatory process of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (further details are provided in chapter VI).

The Committee called for the use of the collective strength of the Groups of Least Developed Countries in New York, Geneva and elsewhere to amplify the voice and visibility of graduating countries, enhance their representation at global policymaking platforms and create a strong interface between national policymaking and international policy perspectives. In addition, the Committee considered the benefits of having a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the graduation of least developed countries to advocate on behalf of graduating countries and generate political backing for new international support measures at the global level.

B. Concrete support through the graduation support facility

As mentioned in its 2020 report to the Council, and in line with the need for concrete action by development and trading partners in providing and extending access to existing and new support measures for graduating and graduated countries, the Committee reviewed the work of its secretariat on the graduation support facility. The facility provides a useful framework for enhancing existing efforts and integrating graduation-related capacity development support. It is designed as a country-led global platform that brings together and delivers coherent capacity-building and advisory support services to graduating and graduated countries in six areas. The Committee requested its secretariat in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to stand ready to deliver these services in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Economic and

Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNCTAD and other partners from within and outside the United Nations system, such as WTO, the International Trade Centre, the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the OECD Development Centre. Under the first area of service, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with WTO and the International Trade Centre, is providing ePing training for public and private sector personnel at the country level to facilitate easy access to information on changes in product requirements in foreign markets. The Committee commended the continued work on the facility and the concrete actions undertaken by the secretariat in piloting it in Vanuatu. It proposed that the pilot be reviewed prior to extending it to other countries.

The Committee also welcomed the interest of the OECD

² WTO General Council, document WT/GC/W/807.

Development Centre in partnering with the Committee and its secretariat to conduct a Production Transformation Policy Review in Bangladesh with peer-to-peer learning as a key element.

Furthermore, the Committee welcomed the support of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for the graduation

support facility. The Committee proposed that, in collaboration with the Office, the facility be introduced as an input to the preparatory process of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at the Asia-Pacific Regional Review scheduled for 2021. The Committee also proposed to host a side event at the Conference in 2022, at which the facility could be formally launched.