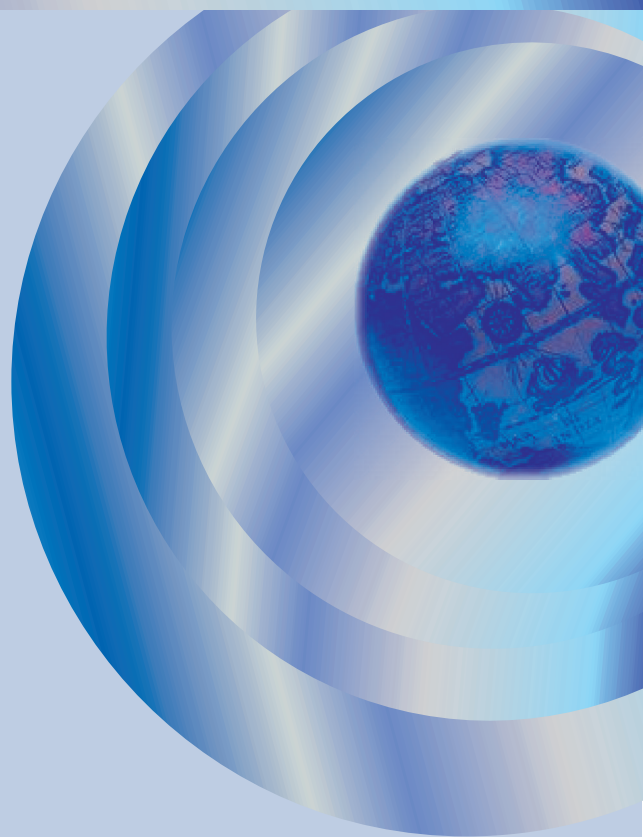


UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT



# UNCTAD ANNUAL REPORT 2001



UNITED NATIONS

UNCTAD/EDM/22

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT  
Geneva

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Prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat



UNITED NATIONS  
New York and Geneva, 2002



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## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>I. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Regular intergovernmental deliberations.....</b>	<b>5</b>
A. Trade and Development Board.....	5
B. Commissions of the Trade and Development Board .....	6
C. Prebisch Lecture Series .....	10
<b>III. Technical cooperation and capacity-building activities .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A. UNCTAD's Programmes .....	11
B. UNCTAD's cooperation with other organizations .....	20
<b>IV. Initiatives to strengthen links with civil society.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>V. Publications .....</b>	<b>25</b>
A. Trade and Development Report, 2001 .....	25
B. World Investment Report, 2001 .....	25
C. Other Publications.....	25
 <i>Annexes</i>	
Annex I: Membership of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board.....	28
Annex II: Intergovernmental structure.....	30
Annex III: Secretariat .....	31
Annex IV: UNCTAD Conferences .....	32
Annex V: Budget expenditures.....	34

## Chapter I

### THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was held in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001. It served to: (a) draw global attention to and bring into sharp political focus the complex development challenges facing LDCs; (b) reaffirm the commitment and determination of the international community to significantly improve the human and economic conditions in LDCs during the present decade and to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people in extreme poverty by 2015; and (c) identify and quantify a number of development goals and targets, along with specific actions by the LDCs themselves and by their development partners.

The Conference was preceded by a comprehensive preparatory process and pre-Conference events at national, regional and global levels, involving Governments, international institutions and civil society. Three regional expert-level preparatory meetings (two in Africa and one in Asia) were organized by the Conference secretariat with the participation and collaboration of UNDP, ECA and ESCAP, which provided substantive and logistical support. A number of pre-Conference events were also held on various thematic and substantive issues. At the national level, 46 of the 49 LDCs prepared National Programmes of Action in which they committed themselves to a wide range of policy actions with a view to achieving accelerated economic growth and development.

The European Union hosted the Conference in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001. There were more than 4,500 participants, an unparalleled number in relation to the previous two United Nations Conferences on the Least Developed Countries. Heads of State and Government, Ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians,

journalists, city mayors, heads of United Nations and other international organizations, representatives of civil society, including NGOs and the private sector, academics and other stakeholders attended the event and participated in deliberations on development policies and concrete measures required to eradicate poverty in LDCs.

The European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Holy See, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden provided generous financial grants to support all aspects of the Conference. In addition, Austria, Canada, Germany, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Spain, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provided support for pre-Conference events.

The Conference adopted a declaration (the Brussels Declaration) and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010. The Brussels Declaration reaffirms the collective responsibility of the international community to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity and to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people, as set out in the Millennium Declaration.

The Programme of Action provides specific goals and targets, along with action-oriented commitments, in seven critically important areas: fostering a people-centred policy framework; good governance at national and international levels; building human and institutional capacities; building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs; enhancing the role of trade in development; reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment; and mobilizing financial resources. An important and

unique feature of this Programme of Action is that it clearly indicates complementary actions by LDCs and their development partners.

The Programme of Action also includes arrangements for implementation, follow-up, review and monitoring of the Programme at national, subregional, regional and global levels in a mutually supportive manner. With regard to institutional arrangements and in accordance with paragraph 116 of the Programme of Action, the General Assembly has established the Office of the High Representative (OHR) for LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in New York with the function of coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action.

In addition to adopting the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the decade 2001-2010, the Conference provided an excellent opportunity for Member States, individually and/or collectively, to launch several important and concrete initiatives in the context of what was called "deliverables". The concept of early deliverables was intended to enhance the action-oriented character of the Conference. Major deliverables cut across such areas as market access, debt and finance, technical assistance, health and employment, investment and infrastructure development.

In parallel with and immediately after the Conference, the UNCTAD secretariat carried out several important activities relevant to the Programme of Action, as indicated in a report to the forty-eighth session of the Trade and Development Board (TD/B/48/16). The report, entitled "Development goals of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010", also described where the least developed countries and their development partners stood in relation to the development goals agreed in the Programme of Action. In addition, OSC made substantive contributions to the work of the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the revision of the criteria and methodology for inclusion in and graduation

from the UN list of LDCs. In this context, a note by the secretariat on the benefits associated with LDC status and the question of graduation (E/2001/CRP.5 and Add.1) was submitted to the 2001 session of ECOSOC.

### **Involvement of civil society**

The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was attended by approximately 600 representatives of NGOs. Two events in particular contributed to the effective participation of civil society: an NGO Forum and a High-level Parliamentary Round Table.

The NGO Forum was organized by a platform of civil society organizations and supported financially by the European Commission. It took place from 10 to 20 May 2001, prior to and parallel to the Conference. It attracted approximately 1,000 participants and provided an opportunity to discuss major problems of the least developed countries and to formulate views, positions and proposals for wide diffusion at the Conference itself. At the end of the Conference, an international NGO monitoring committee was established.

The High-level Parliamentary Round Table was attended by 71 parliamentarians, 47 of whom were from the least developed countries. The parliamentarians decided to establish a network to follow up and implement the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference.

### **Special events related to the Conference**

*Symposium on Partnership for Development: The Role of the Private Sector in Enhancing Productive Capacity in LDCs. Oslo, 29 January 2001*

The Symposium was organized jointly by UNCTAD and the Government of Norway as part of the preparatory process for the Conference. The objective was to provide an opportunity for LDC Governments, their

development partners and representatives of the private sector to discuss ways and means to enhance productive capacity in LDCs. The report of the Symposium constituted a substantive contribution to the Plan of Action adopted by the Conference.

*International Policy Dialogue: Infrastructure Development in LDCs. Bonn, 12–13 March 2001*

The international policy dialogue was organized jointly by UNCTAD and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany as part of the preparatory process for the Conference. It focused on how to ensure a sustained process of poverty reduction and economic growth in LDCs.

*Interactive debate on “Enhancing Productive Capacities: The Role of Investment and Enterprise Development”*

Organized during the Conference in cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the debate was co-chaired by Mr. Cham Prasidh, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia, and Ms. Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development, Germany, and focused on three areas: (i) the importance of national enterprise development; (ii) the potential for FDI in LDCs and its determinants; and (iii) the regulatory and institutional framework for FDI. As a result of the debate, an International Investment Initiative for LDCs was launched. The Initiative combines the investment-related parts of the Programme of

and a number of business leaders from TNCs. The IAC is a joint undertaking by UNCTAD and the ICC. It provides an informal and flexible framework within which senior business executives and senior government officials can interact on questions related to attracting FDI and benefiting from it. The intention is to establish a sustainable mechanism of high-level consultations between business and government leaders.

- The Women Entrepreneurs Forum brought together about 340 participants from LDCs, developing countries, countries in transition and developed countries, as well as representatives from UN bodies, IGOs and NGOs. The exchange of views served as building blocks for accelerating the process of enhancing women entrepreneurs’ participation in the economy and for integrating them into mainstream development.

As a follow-up to the Conference, a divisional focal point was appointed who is monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the deliverables.

*Interactive Thematic Session on Transport*

This one-day session, held on 19 May, examined ways of improving the transport systems of LDCs through enhanced efficiency and management. Some 200 delegates from 80 countries attended the session. Ministers and high-level officials from LDCs acknowledged the

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