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Least Developed Countries and their progress on the sustainable development goals

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183

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Paper

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Least Developed Countries and Their Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals

Peter Lunenborg

 **SOUTH
CENTRE**



RESEARCH PAPER

183

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THEIR PROGRESS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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SOUTH CENTRE

15 SEPTEMBER 2023

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SOUTH CENTRE

In August 1995, the South Centre was established as a permanent intergovernmental organization. It is composed of and accountable to developing country Member States. It conducts policy-oriented research on key policy development issues and supports developing countries to effectively participate in international negotiating processes that are relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Centre also provides technical assistance and capacity building in areas covered by its work program. On the understanding that achieving the SDGs, particularly poverty eradication, requires national policies and an international regime that supports and does not undermine development efforts, the Centre promotes the unity of the South while recognizing the diversity of national interests and priorities.

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ABSTRACT

This Research Paper reviews Least Developed Countries' (LDCs) collective progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on the available data on the indicators for the 169 SDG targets. It makes recommendations for LDCs and other States to consider advancing in relevant UN processes as well as the WTO's.

LDCs made progress on 28% of the SDGs. This collective progress shows that these countries are far from achieving what were deemed achievable goals in 2015. With respect to trade-related SDGs, LDCs have not made progress on any of the five trade-related SDGs that mention LDCs specifically.

This paper does not delve into the causes of this gap, but it suggests that international cooperation and, particularly, the developed countries' assistance, has been insufficient to address the needs of a large part of the world population that still lives in poverty and without hope of a better future. However, the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), a development framework with targets specifically for LDCs -which overlap with SDG targets- appears to dilute several original SDG targets, in particular those in SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Le présent document de recherche dresse une vue d'ensemble des progrès réalisés de manière collective par les pays les moins avancés (PMA) dans la mise en œuvre des objectifs de développement durable (ODD), sur la base des données disponibles concernant les indicateurs liés aux 169 cibles des ODD. Il formule des recommandations pour permettre aux PMA et à d'autres États d'avancer sur la voie des objectifs fixés par les Nations unies et l'OMC.

Les PMA ont progressé sur 28 % des ODD, très loin des objectifs jugés réalisables en 2015. En ce qui concerne les ODD liés au commerce, ils n'ont progressé dans aucun des cinq ODD qui les mentionnent spécifiquement.

Le document ne s'attarde pas sur les raisons de ce retard, mais constate que la coopération internationale et, en particulier, l'aide des pays développés, ont été insuffisantes pour répondre aux besoins d'une grande partie de la population mondiale qui vit toujours dans la pauvreté et sans espoir d'un avenir meilleur. Toutefois, à la lecture du programme d'action de Doha, un cadre de développement comportant des objectifs spécifiques pour les PMA - qui reprend en grande partie les objectifs des ODD -l'impression domine d'une dilution du contenu de plusieurs objectifs originaux des ODD, en particulier ceux de l'ODD 17 (Partenariats pour la réalisation des objectifs).

En este documento de investigación se examina el progreso colectivo de los países menos adelantados en relación con la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) sobre la base de los datos disponibles acerca de las 169 metas de los ODS. Se formulan recomendaciones que los países menos adelantados y otros Estados pueden tener en cuenta para avanzar en los procesos pertinentes de las Naciones Unidas, así como en los de la OMC.

Los países menos adelantados han hecho progresos en el 28 % de los ODS. Este progreso colectivo indica que estos países están lejos de conseguir lo que se consideraban unos objetivos alcanzables en 2015. Con respecto a los ODS relacionados con el comercio, los países menos adelantados no han hecho avances en ninguno de los cinco ODS relacionados con el comercio que mencionan específicamente a los países menos adelantados.

El presente documento no profundiza en las causas de esta brecha, sino que sugiere que la cooperación internacional y, particularmente, la asistencia de los países desarrollados han sido insuficientes para atender las necesidades de gran parte de la población mundial que aún vive en la pobreza y sin esperanzas de un futuro mejor. No obstante, el Programa de Acción de Doha, un marco de desarrollo con metas específicas para los países menos adelantados —que se solapa con metas de los ODS—, parece debilitar algunas metas originales de los ODS, en particular las del ODS 17 (Alianzas para lograr los objetivos).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. LDC PROGRESS ON THE SDGs – AN SDG-BY-SDG OVERVIEW	2
III. LDC PROGRESS ON TRADE-RELATED SDGs	6
IV. THE VALIDITY OF SDG INDICATORS – CASE OF TRADE-RELATED SDGs	10
V. DOHA PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND THE SDGs	13
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	16
<i>Conclusions</i>	16
<i>Recommendations</i>	16
ANNEX 1: LDCs' PROGRESS ON ALL 169 SDG TARGETS	19
SDG 1	19
SDG 2	20
SDG 3	22
SDG 4	26
SDG 5	28
SDG 6	30
SDG 7	31
SDG 8	32
SDG 9	34
SDG 10	35
SDG 11	37
SDG 12	38
SDG 13	40
SDG 14	41
SDG 15	42
SDG 16	45
SDG 17	46
ANNEX 2: LDC PROGRESS ON TRADE-RELATED SDGs	52
ANNEX 3: TRADE-RELATED SDGs AND INDICATORS USED	56

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit which will take place on 18-19 September 2023 in New York will review progress made on the SDGs since their adoption in 2015.² The Global Indicator Framework for the SDGs and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is regularly refined monitors the progress on SDGs.³

Since 1971, the United Nations (UN) has recognized least developed countries (LDCs) as a category of States that are deemed highly disadvantaged in their development process for structural, historical and also geographical reasons. As the LDCs are on the lower rungs of the development ladder⁴, progress on SDGs is particularly relevant for the LDCs. Furthermore, at least 24 SDGs mention “least developed countries” explicitly.⁵

Earlier this year, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) published a report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The UNSG finds that many of the Goals are moderately to severely off track and puts forward five major recommendations to rescue the Goals and accelerate implementation between now and 2030.⁶ This report does not quantify the extent of implementation by SDG, nor does this or another UN report specifically review progress of LDCs on the SDGs in a comprehensive manner using the Global Indicator Framework.⁷

This research paper will review LDCs’ collective progress on the implementation of the SDGs, based on the available data on the indicators for the 169 SDG targets. It will then zoom in and assess the trade-related SDGs and LDC progress on these SDGs. Subsequently, questions are raised with respect to the validity of several trade-related SDGs, i.e., whether the indicators are measuring progress on an SDG target sufficiently. Finally, it will look at the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), a development framework with targets specifically for LDCs, highlighting where the overlaps lie and the interrelationship between the DPoA and SDG targets. Based on the analysis, a set of conclusions and policy recommendations are provided for LDCs and other States to consider advancing in UN processes (e.g., UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UN Statistical Commission), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other relevant fora.

² “SDG Summit”, United Nations. Available from <https://hlpf.un.org/sdg-summit>.

³ “SDG Indicators: Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, United Nations Statistics Division. Available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>.

⁴ Currently, the 46 LDCs comprise around 880 million people, 12 percent of the world population, which face severe structural impediments to growth. However, the LDCs account for less than 2 percent of world GDP and around 1 percent of world trade. See <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/recognition>.

⁵ SDGs 1.a, 2.a, 3.c, 4.b, 4.c, 7.b, 8.1, 8.a, 9.2, 9.a, 9.c, 10.a, 10.b, 11.c, 13.b, 14.6, 14.7, 14.a, 17.2, 17.5, 17.8, 17.11, 17.12 and 17.18

⁶ United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: towards a rescue plan for people and planet, Report of the Secretary-General (special edition), 27 April 2023, A/78/80-E/2023/64. Available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2023/secretary-general-sdg-report-2023--EN.pdf>.

⁷ The first issue of LDC Insight, a publication series launched by the UN Technology Bank for LDCs, notes that “progress towards achieving the SDGs in the least developed countries has been uneven and is not on track to achieve the targets set in the 2030 Agenda”. See <https://www.un.org/technologybank/news/ldc-insight-1-covid-19-recovery-and-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>.

II. LDC PROGRESS ON THE SDGs – AN SDG-BY-SDG OVERVIEW

Indicators are an important element in the review of the SDGs. Each of the 169 SDG targets have at least one indicator.⁸ For instance, SDG 3.3 includes the objective of ending the epidemic of AIDS. The corresponding indicator is 'estimated HIV incidence rate (per 1,000 uninfected population)'. The SDG Global Indicator Framework brings together all indicators. They have been agreed upon at the 48th session of United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2017, on the basis of proposals by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).⁹ Further refinements have been proposed by IEAG-SDGs and adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, under the agenda item 'Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.¹⁰

The use of indicators for assessing progress on all SDG targets contributes to making such review more objective, comprehensive and evidence-based. In the case of the indicator for SDG 3.3, the 'estimated HIV incidence rate (per 1,000 uninfected population)' has been trending down since 2015 when the SDGs were adopted. One could therefore conclude that progress has been made on this SDG.

If data is not available for or around the year 2015, it will not be possible to assess progress since the adoption of the SDGs. Whether an SDG could be met by a stated deadline (2030 or earlier) would require additional assessment, usually through extrapolation of data on the relevant indicator(s).

The UNSG SDG review report contains a 313-page Statistical Annex which presents all the available data on SDG indicators. In most cases, data is split into country regions as well as country groups, including least developed countries.

Based on available data presented in the Statistical Annex, it can be established that **LDCs made progress on 28% of the 169 SDG targets since 2015**. With respect to the remaining 72% (121 SDG targets), LDCs have backslided or progress is unknown. If the 87 SDG targets for which insufficient data is available to assess LDCs' progress are excluded, LDCs made progress on 59% of the SDG targets. For SDG 13 (Climate Action), there is no sufficient data on any of the five SDG 13 targets to assess progress. Annex 1 provides an account of the LDCs' progress on all 169 SDG targets, using the indicators of the SDG Global Indicator Framework. The SDG 'score board' is presented in Table 1 and the summary statistics by SDG in Figure 1 below.

Sustainable Development Goals where LDCs' progress was below the average include: SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).¹¹ This suggests that to get the SDGs back on track for the LDCs, these SDGs are among the most important.

⁸ In some cases, the same indicators are used for more than 1 SDG target (e.g., SDG 8.4 and 12.2).

⁹ "IAEG-SDG Membership", UN Statistics Division. Available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/members/>.

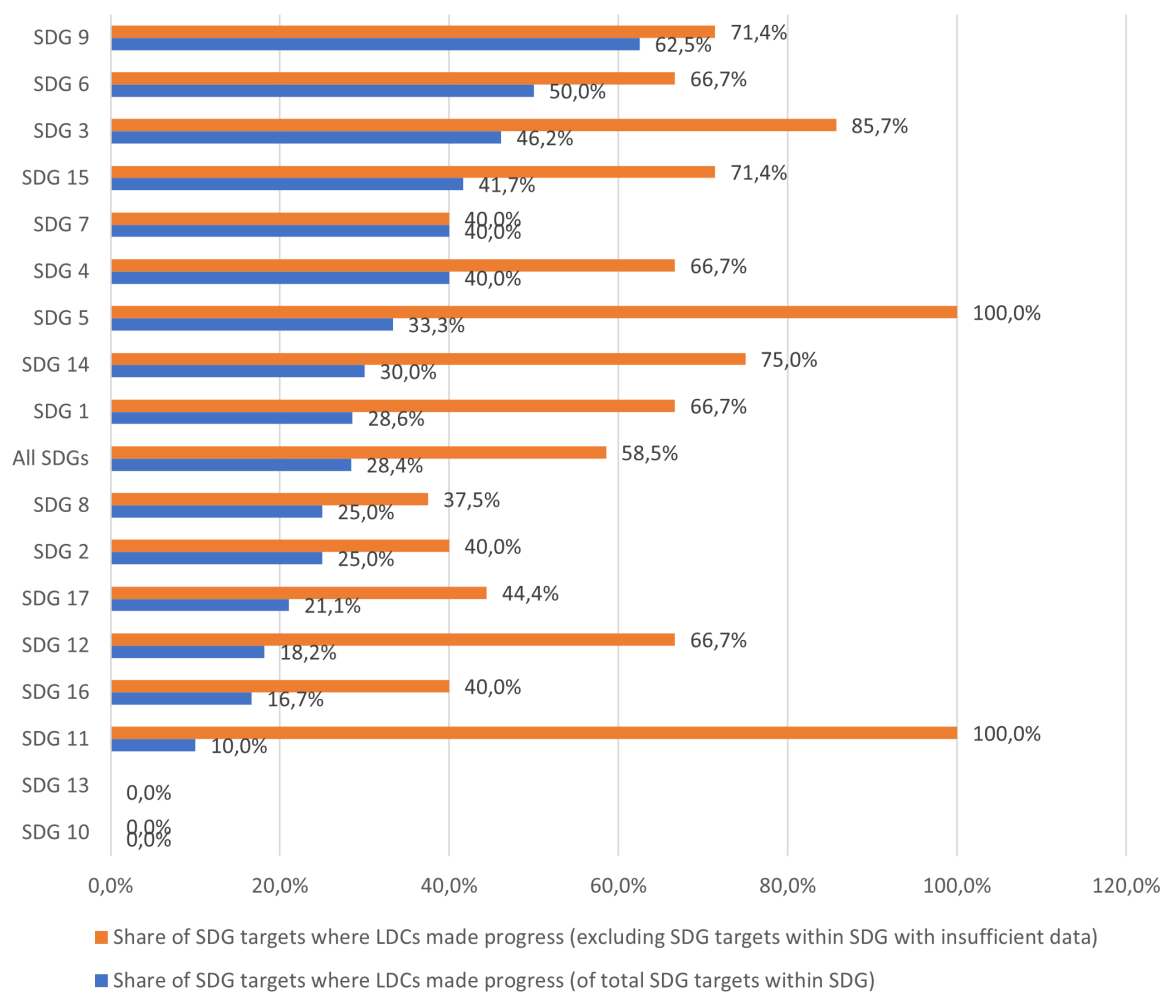
¹⁰ See https://unstats.un.org/UNSDWebsite/statcom/session_54/documents/2023-1-Agenda-E.pdf.

¹¹ The SDGs listed here are the SDGs where the share of SDG targets where LDCs made progress since 2015 is below the average, both including and excluding SDG targets with insufficient data.

Table 1: SDG score board

SDG	Improvement / progress	Decline or no progress	Not enough data to assess LDC progress on SDG	Share of SDG targets where LDCs made progress (of total SDG targets within SDG)	Share of SDG targets where LDCs made progress (excluding SDG targets with insufficient data)
	+	-	?		
SDG 1	2	1	4	29%	67%
SDG 2	2	3	3	25%	40%
SDG 3	6	1	6	46%	86%
SDG 4	4	2	4	40%	67%
SDG 5	3	0	6	33%	100%
SDG 6	4	2	2	50%	67%
SDG 7	2	3	0	40%	40%
SDG 8	3	5	4	25%	38%
SDG 9	5	2	1	63%	71%
SDG 10	0	3	7	0%	0%
SDG 11	1	0	9	10%	100%
SDG 12	2	1	8	18%	67%
SDG 13	0	0	5	0%	n/a
SDG 14	3	1	6	30%	75%
SDG 15	5	2	5	42%	71%
SDG 16	2	3	7	17%	40%
SDG 17	4	5	10	21%	44%
All SDG targets (169 in total)	48	34	87	28%	59%

Figure 1: Share of SDG targets where LDCs made progress since 2015



Data availability issues

Several data availability issues make it challenging to assess LDCs' progress on SDG targets:

- **Unavailability of base line data.** In several cases, as noted, the selected years for which data is available do not include the year 2015 (or a year close to that year, e.g., 2016 or 2017). This means that progress since the adoption of the SDGs cannot be appropriately measured. For instance, one indicator for SDG 6.3 on improving water quality has data for the years 2020 and 2022 only.
- **Only data concerning a single year is presented.** No trend analysis could be made in these cases and no pronouncement could be made whether LDCs are making progress. For instance, SDG 8.7 aims *inter alia* to end child labour in all its forms. The corresponding indicator 'Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour' only has data for the year 2020.
- **LDC-specific data is not presented.** For instance, the indicator for SDG 3.a on strengthening the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is prevalence of current tobacco use. Data for this indicator has been presented for eight world regions and the world average, but not for country groups such as LDCs. Even though data may be available in most instances, its presentation is not readily consistent, which creates additional measurement challenges.
- **No data at all for a particular indicator presented.** Examples include SDG 10.1 on sustaining income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average, SDG 17.2 on the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to LDCs. There is no data either on total greenhouse gas emissions which is one of the indicators to assess progress on SDG 13.2 ('Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning').

Many data availability issues could be easily resolved. For instance, data on greenhouse gas emissions, ODA and income growth are not included, but should be readily available or could be estimated. In some cases where data is available on world region level, the data could be compiled for the LDC group. In many cases, a lack of data availability could be addressed by updating the Statistical Annex using publicly available data.

III. LDC PROGRESS ON TRADE-RELATED SDGs

Several SDGs are trade-related, and are, as such, within the scope of WTO rules and negotiations. The WTO Director-General has also stressed the contribution that the WTO has made to several trade-related SDGs (see Box below), including SDG 14.6, SDG 3.b and SDG 2.b, and could make in the future.

Box: WTO Secretariat's view on WTO's role in advancing sustainable development goals¹²

"We can be proud of the WTO's record on SDG targets directly related to the work we do here," the Director-General said, noting that the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies reached at the WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) last June directly addresses SDG Target 14.6 on prohibiting certain harmful fisheries subsidies while the MC12 Decision on TRIPS and COVID-19 vaccines is in line with SDG Target 3.3.b¹³ on access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines. Likewise, the 2015 Nairobi Ministerial Decision¹⁴ prohibiting the use of export subsidies and equivalent measures contributes to SDG 2.2.b on enhancing agricultural productive capacity in developing and least developed countries.

In this paper, a 'trade-related' SDG refers to one where trade, trade rules, trade negotiations or markets are mentioned as part of the SDG target or when an indicator (also) uses trade data to measure progress on an SDG target.¹⁵ Based on this consideration, 14 SDG targets may be considered trade-related SDGs: SDG 2.b, 2.c, 3.b, 8.a, 8.4/12.2¹⁶, 10.a, 14.6, 15.7, 16.4, 17.5¹⁷, 17.7, 17.10, 17.11, 17.12.

SDG 16.4 on illicit financial flows (IFFs) is among the trade-related SDGs that is particularly relevant for the WTO. Trade misinvoicing is a major component of IFFs and takes shape in different formats. For instance, import overinvoicing can be a way to disguise capital flight as a form of trade payment, import underinvoicing a way to avoid import tariffs and export underinvoicing to evade taxes. Also, trade data is often used to measure the extent of IFFs. ESCAP (2018) estimated that due to trade misinvoicing at least US\$200 billion was lost in tax revenues in 2016 in the Asia-Pacific region, equivalent to at least 6.1% of the region's total tax revenue.¹⁸

SDG 17.7 on promoting the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies is also relevant for WTO. The African Group proposed to discuss this issue with a view to making recommendations for adoption at the WTO's

¹² "DG Okonjo-Iweala: WTO can advance sustainable development goals by delivering results at MC13", WTO news, 30 March 2023. Available from https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news23_e/dgno_20mar23_e.htm.

¹³ SDG Targets 3.3.b and 2.2.b do not exist; they must refer to SDG Targets 3.b and 2.b, respectively.

¹⁴ Decision by the WTO's 10th Ministerial Conference (MC10).

¹⁵ This paper does not aim to define 'trade-related' SDGs. Furthermore, besides trade-related SDGs, the achievement of other SDGs can be influenced (either positively or negatively) through implementation of existing or future WTO rules.

¹⁶ SDG 8.4 and SDG 12.2 use the same indicators to measure progress.

¹⁷ Arguably, SDG 17.5 on adopting investment promotion regimes for LDCs is not related to trade and hence not a 'trade-related' SDG. Nonetheless, the negotiations towards the WTO's Investment Facilitation Agreement by a large subset of WTO Members show that this SDG may be considered a 'trade-related' SDG.

¹⁸ See Alexey Kravchenko, "Where and how to dodge taxes and shift money abroad using trade misinvoicing: A beginner's guide", Trade, Investment and Innovation Working Paper Series No. 1 (Bangkok, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 2018). Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Where_and_how_to_dodge_taxes_and_shift_money_abroad_using_trade_misinvoicing_A_beginner%E2%80%99s_guide_0.pdf.

Thirteenth Ministerial Conference.¹⁹ The African Group also considers 'Access to and Transfer of Technology' as one of guiding principles for the development and implementation of trade-related environmental measures.²⁰

Three trade-related SDGs are 'global' in the sense that neither the SDG target nor the indicators used for that target could provide information on progress made vis-à-vis LDCs. These concern SDG 2.b on correcting and preventing trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets (measured through applied agricultural export subsidies as notified to the WTO) and SDG 17.10 on promoting a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (measured through worldwide and sectoral most-favoured-nation (MFN) and preferential tariff averages). Arguably, SDG 14.6 *inter alia* on the elimination of certain fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing could be classed in this category as well. Nonetheless, the indicator used for SDG 14.6 is the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which can be measured at the country (group) level.

In terms of the progress of LDCs on the trade-related SDGs, based on available data since 2015, **LDCs backslided or did not make progress on 7 of the 12 assessed trade-related SDGs**. For three trade-related SDGs, no data is available to assess LDC progress (SDG 14.6, 15.7 and 16.4).

Five trade-related SDGs mention LDCs specifically: SDG 8.a on Aid for Trade, SDG 10.a on implementation of the principle of special and differential treatment (S&D), SDG 17.5 on the adoption of investment promotion regimes for LDCs, SDG 17.11 on doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 and SDG 17.12 on the implementation of duty-free quota free market access for LDCs. **LDCs have not made progress on any of these SDGs since 2015.**

LDCs' share in world services exports even decreased from 0.75% in 2015 to 0.57% in 2021. In this context, the 2015 Nairobi Ministerial Decision on the Implementation of Preferential Treatment in Favour of Services and Service Suppliers of Least Developed Countries and Increasing LDC Participation in Services Trade²¹, also called the 'LDC Services Waiver', has clearly not resulted in an increase in LDCs' services exports. In view of meeting SDG 17.11, WTO Members should consider more effective operationalization of the LDC Services Waiver or make modifications to it.

For example, as part of the standing item on the agenda in the WTO Council for Trade in Services to review and promote the operationalization of the LDC Services Waiver, an overall assessment and review may be needed to determine why LDCs' services exports are declining. It may also be relevant for the LDC Group to reexamine the preferences that have been notified under the waiver by some WTO Members, as well as encouraging all proponents of services market access to submit meaningful notifications of services preferences under the waiver or revise their preferences as per the LDC collective request. In the current context, it may also be an opportunity for the LDC Group to revise their collective request.

On two trade-related SDGs, LDCs made progress, based on the indicators used and available data for these indicators, namely SDG 3.b and SDG 8.4/12.2. Zooming in on these two, the conclusion that progress has been made becomes quite tenuous. The indicators used for SDG

¹⁹ The role of transfer of technology in resilience building: Climate change mitigation and adaptation, WTO document WT/GC/W/886; WT/CTE/W/254, 5 July 2023.

²⁰ Principles guiding the development and implementation of trade-related environmental measures, WTO document WT/GC/W/894; WT/CTE/W/255, 13 July 2023.

²¹ Ministerial Decision of 19 December 2015, WT/MIN(15)/48; WT/L/982. Available from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc10_e/l982_e.htm.

3.b for which data is available are i) proportion of the target population covered by several vaccines, i.e., Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP), measles, pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13) and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines and ii) total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors. The indicators do not concern essential medicines and it is questionable whether the concerned vaccines/indicators relate to “communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries”.

With respect to SDG 8.4/12.2 on resource efficiency, between 2015 and 2021, LDCs’ domestic material consumption per capita has decreased from 4.13 to 4.06 Tons. Similarly, domestic material consumption per GDP has decreased. A question is whether a (slight) decrease in resource efficiency is ‘progress’ for LDCs. For instance, according to the indicator, one could also reduce the material footprint by increasing the raw material equivalents of exports.

Table 2: LDC progress on trade-related SDGs (overview)

-	+	?
LDC progress on SDG target deteriorated or remained the same since 2015	LDC progress on SDG target improved since 2015	No data available to assess LDC progress on SDG target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 2.c Adoption of measures for proper functioning of food commodity markets /limit extreme food price volatility • SDG 8.a Aid for Trade • SDG 10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries • SDG 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for LDCs • SDG 17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 • SDG 17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries • SDG 17.12 Implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries / provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines • SDG 8.4/12.2 Sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 14.6 Fisheries subsidies • SDG 15.7 Poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products • SDG 16.4 Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows

Notes: Using the available data for the indicators used to measure progress on the SDG target in question. More detailed data can be found in Annex 2.

IV. THE VALIDITY OF SDG INDICATORS – CASE OF TRADE-RELATED SDGs

Indicators will always be an imperfect way to measure progress on a particular SDG target, for example due to the costs of gathering and compiling new data and the complexity or ambiguity of the wording of some SDGs. Annex 3 lists trade-related SDGs with their corresponding indicators. It appears that at present some of these indicators would need to be refined as the ‘measurement validity’ is insufficient.

SDG 17.10 illustrates that the indicators might not always be a valid measurement of an SDG target. Based on the indicators and data for SDG 17.10, progress has been made thereon. At the same time, the UNSG’s first proposed priority action in the area of trade (‘Harness trade to work for the Sustainable Development Goals’) with a view to “rescuing the SDGs” is for States to “[c]ommit to strengthening a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system...”²² Logically, the international community should focus its attention on SDGs where progress is lagging to get back on track. The UNSG SDG review report however signals that no progress on SDG 17.10 has been made and that efforts are needed to achieve that SDG.

The weighted average tariff, as the indicator for SDG 17.10, limits the assessment only to tariff aspects of trade in goods and thus it cannot be an acceptable/valid indicator to assess progress of the entire SDG target, as stipulated. SDG 17.10 recognizes the Doha Development Agenda (but did not prescribe to be limited only to it) as one of the instruments through which “a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization” can be promoted and achieved. This goes beyond tariffs on trade in goods.

Another case is SDG 14.6, to be achieved through negotiations at the WTO on fisheries subsidies. According to the SDG Global Indicator Framework, this SDG target is measured by the indicator ‘Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing’. For LDCs as a group this indicator has remained at ‘Medium’ between 2018 and 2022, and the world as a whole scored ‘Medium’ in 2018 and ‘High’ in 2022. In other words, there is some progress globally on SDG 14.6 since 2018, based on this indicator although no assessment can be made on progress since the year 2015. However, the WTO Director-General used another indicator to highlight progress on this SDG: “the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies reached at the WTO’s 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) last June directly addresses SDG Target 14.6”.²³ Arguably, the conclusion of an agreement at WTO which includes (all) the elements enumerated in SDG 14.6 is a more valid indicator compared to the current one.

SDG 10.a on the implementation of special and differential treatment (S&D) is measured by the proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff. However, S&D is much more than that. It is an integral part of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)/WTO legal framework with currently more than 150 provisions across WTO Agreements and legal instruments.²⁴

²² United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: towards a rescue plan for people and planet, Report of the Secretary-General (special edition), 27 April 2023, A/78/80-E/2023/64. Available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2023/secretary-general-sdg-report-2023-EN.pdf>.

²³ “DG Okonjo-Iweala: WTO can advance sustainable development goals by delivering results at MC13”, WTO news, 30 March 2023. Available from https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news23_e/dgno_20mar23_e.htm.

²⁴ See e.g., South Centre, “Special and Differential Treatment negotiations: State of Play and Proposed Language for WTO’s MC8”, SC/TDP/AN/MC8/2, November 2011. Available from https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/AN_MC8_2_Special-and-Differential-Treatment-Negotiations_EN.pdf.

The indicator for SDG 17.12 on duty free quota free (DFQF) market access for LDCs, average MFN and preferential tariffs applied by developed countries on all products and some product groups from least developed countries (as well as from developing countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States) seems to be a very impartial measurement. For example, in the case of prohibitive tariffs which reduce or block LDCs' exports to a market, trade would be zero or very low and the trade weighted tariff would be zero or very low as well. However, obviously, there is no market access for LDCs in such cases. A variation of the indicator for SDG 10.a, proportion of zero-rated tariff lines applied to imports from LDCs split out by country groups applying these tariffs (non-LDCs, non-developing countries) would be relevant here as well. Additionally, an indicator should count tariff lines which are quota free as well. While the WTO targets duty free quota free market access for 97% of tariff lines, the worldwide provision of zero tariff rated tariff lines (including those not quota free) was 64.1% in 2021 (according to the current indicator for SDG 10.a). The current indicator for SDG 17.12 also does not measure progress on the 2015 WTO Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Rules of Origin for LDC DFQF schemes.²⁵

The previous section also questioned the indicators for SDG 3.b, which seems in need of improvement in light of the following:

- No data has been presented on the proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis
- The indicators used do not provide data on access to affordable essential medicines
- Coverage of target population by a particular vaccine does not automatically result in having access to such vaccines by these populations
- The vaccines for which data is presented might not concern the most important diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries. Thus, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the most important communicable diseases that are among the leading causes of death and disability in low-income countries and marginalized population include HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), malaria, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). For none of these diseases has information been presented.
- The indicators used do not measure whether essential medicines or vaccines are 'affordable', i.e., this might require price data of medicines / vaccines in relation to some other income measure (e.g. GDP per capita, average household income) and to track such indicator in time.

The indicator for SDG 16.4 ('Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)' could be improved. One idea is to add an indicator providing supplemental information on unexplained trade gaps between exporting and importing countries on a country level.²⁶

The indicator used for SDG 2.b on correcting and preventing trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets is focusing exclusively on export subsidies. Yet, the Doha Round also mandated negotiations on substantial improvements in market access for agricultural products and on substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support²⁷.

Market access in agriculture could for instance be measured by the average (or median) MFN tariffs (this is among the indicators used for SDG 17.10, and MFN tariffs actually increased

²⁵ Preferential Rules of Origin for Least Developed Countries, Ministerial Decision of 19 December 2015, WT/MIN(15)/47; WT/L/917. Available from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc10_e/1917_e.htm.

²⁶ Without a pronouncement whether a trade gap would constitute an IFF, but such indicator could provide a signal that IFFs could exist, warranting further analysis and investigation.

²⁷ Doha Ministerial Declaration (2001), paragraph 13. Available from https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm#agriculture.

since 2015), but would need to be split out by world regions and country groups. Another indicator could be the number of agricultural products subject to (applied) tariff rate quotas (TRQs). Trade-distorting domestic support is notified to the WTO and could be used as an indicator for SDG 2.b; however there are disagreements on how this support should be calculated if foodstuffs are purchased using administrative prices by the government for public stockholding programmes for food security purposes. In fact, the 'validity' of the measurement for trade-distorting domestic support (Annex 3 of the Agreement on Agriculture) has been questioned by WTO Members.

SDG 17.5 concerning investment promotion regimes for LDCs is measured by “number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for developing countries, including the least developed countries”. At present this is operationalized by counting the number of States that have at least one bilateral investment treaty (BIT) in force with one LDC. This number increased from 101 in 2015 to 102 in 2021. In 2015, most States had a BIT with at least one LDC in force and this remained the case in 2021.²⁸ This indicator assumes that if a State which currently does not have any BIT with an LDC starts implementing a BIT it would mean the investment promotion regimes for all LDCs would improve. It is not appropriate to measure the improvement of the investment promotion regime for LDCs with the number of BITs signed. Furthermore, the States currently not having a BIT in force with an LDC are most likely LDCs or low-income countries where foreign direct investment (FDI) is unlikely to be originating from. Major capital exporters such as the United States, Canada, China, India, many European countries, Singapore and Gulf countries already have a BIT with at least 1 LDC.

In this particular case, the deficiency of the current indicator has been acknowledged, as the SDG Indicator Metadata for SDG Goal 17 states that indicator reporting “started with preliminary estimates covering BITs, relying on comprehensive and country specific UNCTAD data on BITs”. This document also suggests that ‘investment promotion regime’ should encompass indicators beyond BITs such as investment guarantee schemes for outward investment in LDCs and fiscal or financial support for outward investors in LDCs.²⁹ Indicators would need to be further developed which may include the development and implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks, incentives and/or investment infrastructure such as one-stop shops for investors.

²⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Investment Agreements Navigator. Available from <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/international-investment-agreements/by-economy>.

²⁹ “SDG Indicators: Metadata repository”, UN Statistics Division. Available from, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=16&Target=>.

V. DOHA PROGRAMME OF ACTION AND THE SDGs

The Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) adopted the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022-2031 (DPoA) on 17 March 2022 which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly through resolution A/RES/76/258 on 1 April 2022.³⁰

The DPoA contains a series of commitments between the least developed countries and the international community. Importantly, each commitment section concludes with several targets, which in essence summarize these commitments. These targets are largely derived from or mirror the SDG targets. It does not include all SDG targets but a substantial selection of them. Some examples of SDG targets mirrored in the DPoA include (text in quotations are from the DPoA):

- SDG 5.2 – “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation”
- SDG 7.1 – “By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services”
- SDG 7.2 – “Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the energy mix”
- SDG 9.2 – “Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, double industry’s share of employment and GDP in least developed countries”
- SDG 10.7 – “Facilitate the orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”
- SDG 10.c – “By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrants’ remittances”; “Eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent”
- SDG 11.2 – “By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport system for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport”
- SDG 17.5 – “Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries”

In several cases, DPoA targets are supplementary to SDG targets. Some examples include:

- “Double the generation of electricity per capita in least developed countries by 2030” (not found in SDG 7)
- “Substantially increase economic and export diversification with a view to reaching the level of other developing countries in export concentration by 2030” (not found in SDG 8)
- “Invest in the skills development of migrants and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualification and competences” (not found in SDG 10)
- “Ensure inclusive access to basic social (education, nutrition, health care) and protection services, in particular for migrants in vulnerable situations, in line with national policies and legislation and international obligations” (not found in SDG 10)
- Specific targets related to COVID-19
- “Enhance intergovernmental coordination to prevent illicit financial flows” (supplementary to SDG 16.4)
- Targets related to LDC Graduation: “Enable 15 additional least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031”; “Improve the scope, where necessary, and use of smooth transition measures and incentives for all graduating least developed

³⁰ “Doha Programme of Action”, United Nations. Available from <https://www.un.org/ldc5/doha-programme-of-action>.

countries.”; “Provide specific support measures to recently graduated countries for making the graduation sustainable and irreversible”.

One DPoA target echoes a corresponding SDG target but appears to be more ambitious: “Significantly increase Aid for Trade support for least developed countries, which is expected to double by 2031 from 2018 levels”. SDG 8.a only targets to “increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries.”

In several cases, DPoA targets seem to be less ambitious, particularly with respect to SDG 17 (Partnership for the Sustainable Development Goals), in the areas of official development assistance (ODA) commitments (SDG 17.2), debt distress (SDG 17.4), technology transfer of environmentally sound technologies (SDG 17.7) and duty-free quota free market access (SDG 17.12). Table 3 below provides the texts of these SDG targets and the corresponding DPoA targets.

In addition, in the case of SDG 17.11, the target to “Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries” has been extended from 2020 to 2031. As noted before, this SDG has not been met in the area of goods (slight increase) and LDCs share in global exports of services went down since 2015.

Table 3: DPoA targets which are less ambitious than the corresponding SDG targets (examples in SDG 17)

Issue	SDG target	DPoA target
Official development assistance (ODA) commitments	17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries	Ensure the fulfilment of respective ³¹ ODA commitments to least developed countries
Debt distress	17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining <u>long-term</u> debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to <u>reduce</u> debt distress	Address the debt distress of least developed countries by 2025 and provide coordinated and appropriate debt solutions in a timely manner to all least developed countries that face debt vulnerabilities or are in debt distress, in order to work towards sustainable debt levels in all least developed countries
Technology transfer of environmentally sound technologies	17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries <u>on favourable terms</u> , including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	Promote the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, including digital and environmentally sound technologies, to least developed countries
Duty Free Quota Free Market Access	17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	Facilitate market access for products of least developed countries, including by developing simple and transparent rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by WTO members at the Ministerial Conference held in Bali in 2013

³¹ In the DPoA it is not clear what 'respective' refers to. It could imply the 0.15-0.20 percent target in SDG 17.2. At the same time, the commitment section in DPoA notes that for developed countries "there is a clear need" to "enhance their relevant ODA commitments to least developed countries", after noting that ODA to LDCs reduced from 0.10 per cent in 2011 to 0.08 percent in 2019. This could imply a target "enhancement from 0.08 per cent" rather than attaining the 0.15-0.20 percent target of SDG 17.2.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This research paper has reviewed the LDCs' collective progress on the SDGs, based on the available data on the indicators for the 169 SDG targets. The review shows that these countries are far from achieving what were deemed achievable goals in 2015. It can be established that LDCs made progress on 28% of the 169 SDG targets since 2015. With respect to the other 72% (121 SDG targets), LDCs backslided or progress is unknown. If the 87 SDG targets for which insufficient data is available to assess LDCs' progress are excluded, LDCs made progress on 59% of the SDG targets.³² Progress on a particular SDG does not mean that such SDG will be attained by 2030, rather that things are going in the right direction from 2015.

Sustainable Development Goals where LDCs' progress is below the average include: SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

With respect to trade-related SDGs, since 2015, LDCs backslided or did not make progress on 7 of the 12 assessed trade-related SDGs. For three trade-related SDGs, no data is available to assess LDC progress (SDG 14.6, 15.7 and 16.4). LDCs have not made progress on any of the five trade-related SDGs that mention LDCs specifically: SDG 8.a on Aid for Trade, SDG 10.a on implementation of the principle of special and differential treatment (S&D), SDG 17.5 on the adoption of investment promotion regimes for LDCs, SDG 17.11 on doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 and SDG 17.12 on the implementation of duty-free quota free market access for LDCs. Notably, LDCs' share in services exports decreased from 0.75% in 2015 to 0.57% in 2021.

Indicators will always be an imperfect way to measure progress on a particular SDG target, for example due to the costs of gathering and compiling new data and complexity of wording of some SDGs. In the case of trade-related SDGs, it appears that the indicators do not adequately measure them. This also renders them less useful/relevant as a tool for assessing progress on the SDGs.

The Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), a development framework with targets specifically for LDCs, has overlaps with SDG targets. Several targets are supplementary to the SDGs, several others appear to be a dilution of the original SDG target, in particular those in SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals). In contrast to the SDGs, the DPoA does not have its own dedicated Indicator Framework, setting out how its targets should be measured.

Recommendations

Progress on, and ultimately achieving, all SDGs is important. Yet, in terms of prioritizing, the most relevant SDGs where the international community should focus its efforts on to get the SDGs 'back on track' are particularly those where the LDCs' progress was below the average. These include SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

³² Making progress on an SDG does not imply that it will be met as this would require additional assessment, e.g. extrapolation of the data.

The following policy recommendations are made, based on the preceding analysis, respectively for UN processes (e.g., UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UN Statistical Commission) and the WTO.

UN processes

- **Data availability on the SDG indicators should be improved**, including where possible, through the addition of baseline data (data for or around the year(s) when the SDGs were adopted) as well as LDC-specific data. In many cases, data gaps could be resolved on the basis of publicly available data, such as greenhouse gas emissions (for SDG 13.2) or ODA/GNI share. The Statistical Annex to the UNSG SDG Review report (E/2023/64, annex) should be updated as soon as possible, ideally, before the next meeting of the UN Statistical Commission in February/March 2024.
- **The SDG Global Indicator Framework would need to be finetuned** to increase its validity and to enhance its role as a tool to measure progress on the SDGs. With respect to trade-related SDGs, trade delegates in particular from developing countries as well as the broader trade community in Geneva could provide valuable input into such a process, in collaboration with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). Proposals for recommendations could be made to and adopted by the next meeting of the UN Statistical Commission.
- **The relationship between DPoA and SDG targets should be clarified**, if possible, at the UN SDG Review Summit. An apparent dilution of SDG targets through subsequent DPoA targets is not appropriate, including for SDG 17, as this seems to imply a weaker Global Partnership for the SDGs. Another question is whether DPoA should have its own DPoA Indicator Framework like the SDG Indicator Framework, or whether it could be built into the SDG Indicator Framework. There is a need for much better coherence and consistency between the two frameworks.

WTO

- **WTO, as the forum for multilateral trade relations, is particularly relevant to facilitate the attainment of the trade-related SDGs.**³³ Some of these SDGs, such as reducing illicit financial flows through trade misinvoicing (SDG 16.4), may be addressed through or are the subject matter of existing WTO agreements. The new impetus to mainstream the SDGs in the WTO needs to focus on trade-related SDGs and/or those that fall squarely within the scope of the WTO.
- **Given the absence of LDC progress on trade-related SDGs, WTO Members should adopt additional measures**, including at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, on *inter alia* the LDC services waiver (in view of the goal of doubling LDC share in services exports, SDG 17.11), transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies (SDG 17.7) and duty-free and quota-free market access (SDG 17.12).
- In the area of services (SDG 17.11), an overall assessment and review may be needed to determine why LDC services exports are declining. This could be brought into the WTO Council for Trade in Services under the standing agenda item “Operationalization of the LDC Services Waiver”. It may also be relevant for the LDC Group to reexamine the preferences that have been notified under the waiver by some WTO Members, as well as encouraging all proponents of services market access to submit meaningful notifications of services preferences under the waiver or revise their preferences as per the LDC

³³ This paper has identified the following trade-related SDGs: SDG 3.b, 2.c, 3.b, 8.a, 10.a, 14.6, 15.7, 16.4, 17.5, 17.7, 17.10, 17.11 and 17.12.

collective request. In the current context, it may also be an opportunity for the LDC Group to revise their collective request.

- **Several of the DPoA targets which are supplementary to the SDGs reinforce the view that WTO could play a possible role in the implementation of development goals for LDCs, including in increasing economic and export diversification (SDG 8), reducing illicit financial flows (related to SDG 16.4) and mutual recognition of skills, qualification and competences (supplementary to SDG 17.11).** The latter target on mutual recognition points towards measures complementary to the LDC Services waiver which currently only covers market access, not regulatory issues. On illicit financial flows, the WTO can play a role in relation to the DPoA Target to “enhance intergovernmental coordination to prevent illicit financial flows”, for instance, in the context of the WTO’s Committee on Trade Facilitation.
- Furthermore, the DPoA has a separate commitment section on LDC Graduation with three corresponding targets including smooth graduation. On this issue, the LDC Group made a proposal for consideration of WTO Members.³⁴ Based on the state of play of LDC progress, it seems justified to afford additional measures to LDCs who are on the path or set to graduate, once they graduate. Likewise, other intergovernmental organisations should also consider additional measures in favour of recently graduated LDCs.

³⁴ Trade Related Challenges of the Least Developed Countries and Way Forward: Proposal for WTO Smooth Transition Measures in favour of Countries Graduated from the LDC Category, Communication From Djibouti On Behalf Of The LDC Group, WTO document WT/GC/W/807/Rev.2, 6 December 2022.

ANNEX 1: LDCs' PROGRESS ON ALL 169 SDG TARGETS**SDG 1**

SDG 1	Progress	Comment
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	Proportion of LDC population below the international poverty line of US\$2.15 per day declined from 34.5% in 2015 to 31.4% in 2019 (no data available for more recent years) Proportion of LDC population below the international poverty line of US\$2.15 per day declined from 33.8% in 2015 to 30.1% in 2022	LDCs made progress on this SDG, although progress has been quite modest
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	No trend data on proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, distinguishing children, mothers with newborns, retirees, unemployed persons, persons with disabilities and the vulnerable (only for the year 2020) No baseline data for LDCs on proportion of population covered by at least one social protection benefit (only for year 2019)	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	Proportion of LDC population using basic drinking water services increased from 62% in 2015 to 67.1% in 2022 Proportion of LDC population using basic sanitation services increased from 33.8% in 2015 to 41.4% in 2022	The indicators used appear to mainly measure the extent of access to basic services not the other economic resources listed in SDG 1.4 Based on the indicators used, LDCs made progress on this SDG

SDG 1	Progress	Comment
1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	No LDC-specific data, no base line data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	Official development assistance grants for poverty reduction as proportion of GNI decreased from 0.156% in 2015 to 0.131% in 2021	No progress was made on this SDG for LDCs
1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established

SDG 2

SDG 2	Progress	Comment
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	<p>Prevalence of undernourishment in LDCs increased from 20% in 2015 to 24.3% in 2021</p> <p>Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population increased from 49.1% in 2015 to 58.4% in 2021</p> <p>Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the population increased from 19.2% in 2015 to 24.6% in 2021</p>	Deterioration
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are stunted decreased from 36.4% in 2015 to 32.3% in 2022	Overall LDC progress cannot be established for this SDG, due to lack of data on wasting.

SDG 2	Progress	Comment
	<p>No base line data on proportion of children under 5 years of age who are moderately or severely wasted (only for year 2022)</p> <p>Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are moderately or severely overweight stayed almost the same (3.1% in 2015, 3.2% in 2022)</p> <p>Proportion of women aged 15-49 years with anaemia increased slightly from 38.9% in 2015 to 39.4% in 2019</p>	While levels of stunting have decreased, proportion of women with anaemia has increased.
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	No data	LDC progress cannot be established for this SDG
2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	No data	LDC progress cannot be established for this SDG
2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed	<p>Plant genetic resources accessions stored ex situ in LDCs increased from 186,202 in 2016 to 195,878 in 2021</p> <p>No baseline data for the number of local and transboundary breeds for which sufficient genetic materials are stored for reconstitution in case of extinction (data for the year 2023)</p>	Based on indicators for which data is available, LDCs have made some progress

SDG 2	Progress	Comment
	No LDC-specific data on proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction	
2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries	LDCs' agriculture orientation index for government expenditures stayed roughly the same, 0.22 in 2015 and 0.21 in 2021 Total official flows (gross disbursements) to the agriculture sector in 2015 as well as 2021 was USD 4 billion	No increase in investment
2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round	Notified agricultural export subsidies decreased from USD 218 million in 2015 to USD 12 million in 2020	Progress has been made, based on the indicator used
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	Proportion of LDCs recording abnormally high or moderately high food prices increased from 22% in 2015 to 34.1% in 2021	Deterioration

SDG 3

SDG 3	Progress	Comment
3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	Maternal mortality ratio in LDCs decreased from 439 maternal deaths per 100,000 births in 2015 to 377 in 2020 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased	LDCs made progress on this SDG
3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5	Under-five mortality rate decreased from 73.6 death per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 61.2 in 2021. Neonatal mortality rate also decreased between 2015 and 2021.	LDCs made progress on this SDG

SDG 3	Progress	Comment
mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births		
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	<p>Estimated HIV incidence rate (per 1,000 uninfected population) decreased from 0.69 in 2015 to 0.44 in 2021.</p> <p>Estimated incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 population) decreased from 228 in 2015 to 200 in 2021</p> <p>Malaria incidence per 1,000 population at risk decreased from 190.6 in 2015 to 179 in 2021</p> <p>No baseline data exists on Hepatitis B incidence, but this incidence has increased between 2018 and 2020</p> <p>Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases has declined slightly from 583.8 million people in 2015 to 505 million in 2021</p>	LDCs made progress on this SDG
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	<p>No LDC-specific data on mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease</p> <p>Suicide rate in LDCs has stayed roughly the same between 2015 and 2019</p>	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	<p>No base line nor LDC-specific data on prevalence of alcohol disorders</p> <p>Alcohol consumption per capita remained at 3.9 liters in 2015 and 2019</p>	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established.
3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	No LDC-specific data on death rate due to road traffic injuries	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established.
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning,	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods increased from 55% in 2015 to 60.1% in 2023	LDCs made progress on this SDG

SDG 3	Progress	Comment
information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	<p>Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women aged 10-14 years decreased from 4.8 in 2015 to 4.1 in 2023</p> <p>Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years decreased from 101.2 in 2015 to 91.1 in 2023</p>	
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	<p>Universal health coverage (UHC) service coverage index increased slightly from 40 in 2015 to 44 in 2021</p> <p>Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health (greater than 25 per cent) as a share of total household expenditure or income increased from 2.85% in 2015 to 3.37% in 2019</p>	<p>The first indicator seems to indicate a slight improvement in universal health coverage. At the same time, relatively more people are facing large health expenditures.</p> <p>There are no other indicators on access to health services or medicines</p> <p>If more prominence is given to the composite UHC index, it can be inferred that LDCs made progress on this SDG</p>
3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination	<p>No baseline data on mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene; mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution (data available for the year 2019)</p> <p>Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisonings (per 100,000 population) stayed roughly the same: 2.1 in 2015 and 2 in 2019</p>	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established.
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	No LDC-specific data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established.

SDG 3	Progress	Comment
<p>3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all</p>	<p>Proportion of the target population with access to 3 doses of diphtheria-tetanus pertussis (DTP3) decreased from 78% in 2015 to 73% in 2021</p> <p>Proportion of the target population with access to measles-containing-vaccine second dose (MCV2) increased from 30% in 2015 to 45% in 2021</p> <p>Proportion of the target population with access to pneumococcal conjugate 3rd dose (PCV13) increased from 59% in 2015 to 68% in 2021</p> <p>Proportion of the target population with access to human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination increased from 1% in 2015 to 17% in 2021</p> <p>Total net official development assistance disbursements to medical research and basic health sectors increased from USD 5 billion in 2015 to USD 6 billion in 2021</p>	<p>Based on the indicators used, LDCs made progress on this SDG</p>
<p>3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States</p>	<p>No baseline data on health worker density (physicians, nursing and midwifery personnel, pharmacists, dentists)</p>	<p>LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established.</p>
<p>3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks</p>	<p>Average International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacity score decreased from 60 in 2015 to 51 in 2022</p> <p>Percentage of bloodstream infection due Escherichia coli resistant to 3rd-generation cephalosporin (e.g., ESBL- E. coli) among patients seeking care and whose blood sample is</p>	<p>Deterioration</p>

SDG 3	Progress	Comment
	taken and tested increased from 61.9% in 2016 to 66.7% in 2020	

SDG 4

SDG 4	Progress	Comment
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	No LDC-specific data on proportion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics In LDCs, completion rate primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education increased between 2015 and 2021, for boys and girls	LDCs made progress on this SDG
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	Adjusted net enrolment rates, one year before the official primary entry age increased between 2015 and 2020	LDCs made progress on this SDG
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	Adjusted gender parity (female/male) index for the proportion of teachers has remained around 1 for primary education and organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) but has remained significantly above 1 for secondary education (1.19 in 2015 as well as 2020)	Using the available indicator for this SDG, LDCs did not make progress on this SDG
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established

SDG 4	Progress	Comment
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	<p>Proportion of schools with access to electricity increased between 2015 and 2020</p> <p>Proportion of schools with access to computers for pedagogical purposes stayed the same between 2015 and 2020 (48.8% in 2015, 48.6% in 2020, for upper secondary education)</p> <p>Not sufficient LDC-specific data on other indicators for assessing progress , such as proportion of schools with access to internet for pedagogical purposes or with basic handwashing facilities</p>	LDCs made progress on this SDG
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	Volume of official development assistance (gross disbursements) for scholarships for LDCs in 2021 was the same as in 2015 (USD 222 million vs USD 225.2 million)	No substantial expansion based on the indicator used
4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications increased for most levels of education between 2015 and 2020, except with a decrease recorded for upper secondary	LDCs made progress on this SDG

SDG 4	Progress	Comment
	education	

SDG 5

SDG 5	Progress	Comment
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Depending on the area, 55% to 66.7% of LDCs have legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality, below world average (70.1% to 80%) No baseline data; data is only available for year 2022	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	In 2018, 22% of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months (world average 12.5%) No baseline data; data is only available for year 2018	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 declined from 12.8% in 2012, to 10.9% in 2017 and 8.5% in 2022. Similarly, proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 declined No LDC-specific data on proportion of girls and women aged 15–19 years who have undergone female genital Mutilation, but trend is declining in Sub-Saharan Africa	LDCs made progress on this SDG
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	No data available	LDCs made progress on this SDG

SDG 5	Progress	Comment
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	<p>Proportion of seats held by women in LDC parliaments (single and lower chambers) increased from 21.7% in 2015 to 26.2% in 2023</p> <p>No baseline data exists on proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government, data refers to the years 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 (declining trend for LDCs but progress compared to the year 2015 cannot be established)</p> <p>Proportion of managerial positions held by women increased from 25.1% in 2015 to 29.6% in 2021</p>	LDCs made progress on this SDG
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	<p>No baseline data. Data on proportion of women aged 15-49 years (married or in-union) who make their own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights refers to the year 2023</p> <p>Data on the extent to which countries have laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health Care refers to the year 2022</p>	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	No data	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	<p>No baseline data.</p> <p>Data on proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone (split by female and male) begins by the year 2020. Female ownership of mobile telephones increased between 2020 and</p>	Arguably since 2020 LDCs have made progress on this SDG, but an ownership gap between females and males continues (which is not part of the indicator). In any case, no data

SDG 5	Progress	Comment
	2022 from 44.3% to 48% but the gap in ownership compared with males (62.9% in 2020, 67.5% in 2022) did not decrease	exists on ownership patterns around the year 2015 so LDC progress on this SDG since adoption of the SDGs cannot be established.
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	No LDC-specific data, data refers to the year 2021	LDC progress on this SDG cannot be established

SDG 6

SDG 6	Progress	Comment
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	Share of LDC population using safely managed drinking water services increased from 33.3% in 2015 to 37.5% in 2022	Improvement, but majority of people in LDCs do not use safe water
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	Share of LDC population using safely managed sanitation services increased from 21.7% in 2015 to 26.7% in 2022 Share of LDC population with basic handwashing facilities on premises increased from 28.5% in 2015 to 34% in 2022	Improvement, but majority of people in LDCs do not have safe sanitation
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	No baseline data on proportion of safely treated domestic wastewater flows as well no baseline data for LDCs on proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	Water use efficiency indicator increased for LDCs between 2015 and 2020 Level of water stress as measured by freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources in 2020 the same as in 2015	Improvement

SDG 6	Progress	Comment
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	Degree of integrated water resources management slightly increased between 2017 and 2020. No LDC-specific data on proportion of countries by levels of transboundary cooperation	Improvement
6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	Indicators show the changes in different water-related ecosystems but not the status of these ecosystems in 2015	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	Total official development assistance (gross disbursements) for water supply and Sanitation around USD 3 billion in 2020 and 2015	No expansion
6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	Proportion of LDCs with clearly defined procedures in law or policy for participation by service users and communities in planning programs in rural drinking water supply in 2019 lower than 2014 and 2017	Deterioration

SDG 7

SDG 7	Progress	Comment
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	The proportion of the population with access to electricity has significantly increased, from 42.3% in 2015 to 56.3% in 2021.	Progress made but a large share of LDC population still has no access no electricity. More than half of LDC population outside urban areas (54.5%) does not have access to electricity. No data for 2015 on access to electricity for urban/rural populations
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix	The share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption has remained high. It has decreased from 73.2% in 2015 to 71.4% in 2020	No progress for LDCs. However, the share remains relatively high compared to other regions (world average in 2020 was 19.1%).
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	LDC's energy efficiency has increased. Between 2015 and 2020, the energy intensity level of	Improvement

	primary energy (a measure of energy efficiency) has decreased from 4.92 to 4.69 megajoules per USD constant 2017 purchasing power parity(PPP) GDP, which is in line with the world average.	
7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology	International financial flows to least developing countries in support of clean energy research and development and renewable energy production decreased from USD 4.1 billion in 2015 to USD 2.03 billion in 2021, and LDC's share in such flows decreased from 32.6% to 18.9% during the same period.	Decline
7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support	Installed renewable electricity-generating capacity (measured in watts per capita) has increased from 28.8 to 39.1 Watts per capita between 2015 and 2021, but LDCs share in installed renewable generating capacity declined from 18.6% in 2015 to 14.6% in 2021	Improvement for LDCs but no relative improvement compared to world as implied in the SDG indicator

SDG 8

SDG 8	Progress	Comment
8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita was never 7 per cent since 2015. Based on available data presented in Statistical Annex, LDCs' GDP growth rate before 2015 was higher than after 2015	SDG not achieved
8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	Based on available data presented in Statistical Annex, LDCs' annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person before 2015 was higher than after 2015	SDG not achieved
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and	No baseline data available for proportion of informal employment in total employment	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services		
8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead	Between 2015 and 2021, LDCs' domestic material consumption per capita has decreased from 4.13 to 4.06 Tons. Similarly, domestic material consumption per GDP has decreased.	Improvement
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	Unemployment rate has increased from 4.7 to 5.4 per cent between 2015 and 2022	Decline
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training has increased from 24.6% in 2015 to 25.8% in 2022	Decline
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	No base line data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	Level of national compliance with labour rights has increased	Improvement
8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	No LDC-specific data on the indicator 'Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP'	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	Number of commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) per capita has increased. Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider has increased	Improvement
8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the	Total official development assistance for trade (commitments) decreased from USD 19.8 billion in 2015 to USD 18.8 billion in	Support appears to have hold steady, did not decline nor increase.

Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries	2021 while disbursement increased from USD 12 billion in 2015 to USD 13.5 billion in 2021 (measured in millions of constant 2021 US dollars)	
8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 9

SDG 9	Progress	Comment
9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	Between 2015 and 2021, maritime Freight loaded and unloaded increased for LDCs from 312.5 to 513.3 millions of metric Tons. In terms of world share it has increased as well No base line data for air, road and rail transport	Improvement
9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries	In LDCs, manufacturing value added share in GDP and manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment have increased.	Improvement, but industry's share of employment and gross domestic product have not doubled and rate of growth suggests that the target will not be met by 2030.
9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets	No base line data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities	CO2 emission per GDP have remained the same between 2015 and 2020 and CO2 emission per unit of manufacturing value added have decreased	Improvement
9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries,	In 2015 and 2020, LDCs' research and development (R&D) expenditure	Improvement

SDG 9	Progress	Comment
including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending	as a proportion of GDP has remained at 0.27%, whereas number of researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants increased from 70 to 76.	
9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States	Total official flows (gross disbursements) for infrastructure increased from USD 8.7 billion in 2015 to USD 10.7 billion in 2021, LDCs' share in these flows increased.	Improvement
9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities	Proportion of medium and high-tech manufacturing value added in total value added remained the same in LDCs (10.6% in 2015 and 10.56% in 2020)	No improvement
9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020	Proportion of the population covered by at least a 2G, 3G or 4G mobile network increased since 2015	Improvement

SDG 10

SDG 10	Progress	Comment
10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	Labour share of GDP decreased slightly from 43.3% in 2015 to 43% in 2020	No improvement. Questions surrounding the validity of the indicator to measure SDG 10.4

SDG 10	Progress	Comment
10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions	No LDC-specific data. Data concerns the proportion of developing countries in the membership of international organizations and proportion of developing countries in the voting rights at international organizations	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	<p>No baseline data available for the year 2015 for proportion of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people; data available concerns the year 2021</p> <p>Number of refugees per 100,000 population increased between 2015 and 2022 and is much higher than world average. Total deaths and disappearances recorded during migration increased</p>	No improvement
10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements	Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries with zero-tariff remained roughly the same (63.8% in 2015, 64.1% in 2021)	Implementation of special and differential treatment concerns more than only the implementation of duty free market access (which is also covered by SDG 17.11). Hence, it is difficult to establish progress on SDG 10.a using the current indicator.

SDG 10	Progress	Comment
10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes	Total resource flows (net disbursements) for development to LDCs increased between 2015 and 2021, with LDC share declining from 16.5% to 13.6%	LDC share has been declining.
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 11

SDG 11	Progress	Comment
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	No LDC-specific data on proportion of urban population living in slum	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	No base line data (for year 2015) and no LDC-specific data on proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	No data after the year 2015 on ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate; also no LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	No base line data (for year 2015) and no LDC-specific data on Municipal Solid Waste collection coverage	Improvement (based on partial data)

SDG 11	Progress	Comment
	Mean annual concentration of fine suspended particles with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5) decreased in LDCs between 2015 and 2019	
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	No base line data and no LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established. Target deadline has already been passed
11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 12

SDG 12	Progress	Comment
12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	Limited number of policies, instruments and mechanism in place for sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in LDCs	No improvement. It is assumed that developed countries are to take lead in achieving SDG 12.1
12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	The same indicators as for SDG 8.4 are used	Improvement
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	No base line data on food waste per capita only for year 2019	Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 12	Progress	Comment
12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	<p>No base line data for parties meeting their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) on hazardous waste, and other chemicals (only for year 2020)</p> <p>Between 2015 and 2019, LDC's generation of electronic waste in world increased from 731.7 to 969.5 Thousands of Tonnes, or in terms of world share from 1.6% to 1.8%.</p> <p>No LDC-specific data on electronic waste</p>	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	The same indicator as for SDG 7.b is used, on installed renewable electricity-generating capacity	Improvement for LDCs. (as opposed to SDG 7.b, there is no particular focus on LDCs in the case of SDG 12.a)
12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in	Fossil fuel subsidies (production and consumption) in LDCs are low, in terms of	Based on the indicators, it is difficult to establish whether the

SDG 12	Progress	Comment
accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities	per capita, when compared to world average. When expressed as percentage of GDP, in some years, LDCs' fossil fuel subsidies are higher than world average in some years lower.	target is met by LDCs, due to the absence of a definition of "inefficient" fossil fuel subsidies. At any rate, LDC's total fossil fuel subsidies (not presented in the data) are a fraction of the world total.

SDG 13

SDG 13	Progress	Comment
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	Only data for the year 2022 concerning the number of countries that reported having a National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy which is aligned to the Sendai Framework; no LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	Only data for the year 2023; no LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible	No LDC-specific data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	Only data for the year 2023	Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 14

SDG 14	Progress	Comment
14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	Index of coastal eutrophication decreased for LDCs between 2015 and 2022 and beach litter originating from national land-based sources that ends that ends in the ocean decreased between 2017 and 2021 (and is lower than world average)	Improvement
14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	No data	Progress on this indicator cannot be established
14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels is by FAO Area, no LDC-specific data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	Mean proportion of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas increased in LDCs from 26.2% in 2015 to 29% in 2022	Improvement
14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing remained 'medium' between 2018 and 2022	Indicator does not concern the actual prohibition of subsidies through the implementation of a legal instrument negotiated the WTO. Progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 14	Progress	Comment
14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP declined in LDC from 1.24% in 2015 to 0.88% in 2019	Decline
14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries	No LDC-specific data on the indicator 'National ocean science expenditure as a share of total research and development funding'	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	LDCs have maintained a high level of implementation of legal/regulatory/policy/institutional frameworks which recognize and protect access rights for small-scale fisheries since 2015	Based on available data and the indicator used, SDG is achieved
14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The future we want"	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 15

SDG 15	Progress	Comment
15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	Mean proportion of terrestrial and freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas increased since 2015 Forest area as a proportion of total land area declined from 27.2% in 2015 to 26.2% in 2020	Improvement
15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and	Proportion of forest area within legally established protected areas remained at 29.2% between 2015 and 2020	Improvement

SDG 15	Progress	Comment
substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	Proportion of forest area under a long-term management plan increased from 31.4% in 2015 to 34.3% in 2020	
15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area increased substantially, from 6.3% in 2015 to 12.7% in 2019	Decline
15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	Mean proportion of mountain Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas increased from 39.1% in 2015 to 41.8% in 2022	Improvement
15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species	No LDC-specific data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed	<p>Number of LDCs that have legislative, administrative and policy framework or measures reported to the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House increased from 0 to 16</p> <p>Number of LDCs that have legislative, administrative and policy framework or measures reported through the Online Reporting System on Compliance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) increased from 0 to 18</p> <p>Number of LDCs that are Parties to the Nagoya Protocol increased from 25 in 2015 to 40 in 2022</p> <p>Number of LDCs that are contracting Parties to the (PGRFA) increased from 38 in 2015 to 41 in 2022</p> <p>Number of Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTAs)</p>	Improvement

SDG 15	Progress	Comment
	transferring plant genetic resources for food and agriculture increased but LDC share in world total decreased from 9.2% in 2015 to 8.5% in 2022	
15.7 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	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species	Proportion of LDCs with National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) targets alignment to Aichi Biodiversity target 9 set out in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 increased from 83% in 2016 to 91% in 2020 and 2022	Improvement
15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	Only data for year 2022	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	Total official development assistance commitments on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems to LDCs was USD 2.3 billion in 2015 and USD 2.1 billion in 2021	No significant increase
15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 16

SDG 16	Progress	Comment
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population increased from 8 in 2015 to 9.5 in 2021	Decline
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month and Proportion of women aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 higher than world average	No trend data is available but the target to 'end' violence is not achieved, including when compared with world average
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population increased slightly from 40.7% in 2015 to 41% in 2021	The question is whether 'unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population' is measuring SDG 16.3 comprehensively
16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	No trend data available	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	No trend data available; no LDC-specific data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Ratio for female members of parliaments around 0.5. Ratio of young members in parliament also around 0.5	Based on available data and the indicators used, SDG is achieved
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	Overlap with the indicators for SDG 10.6 No LDC-specific data. Data concerns the proportion of developing countries in the membership of international organizations and proportion of developing countries in the voting rights at international organizations	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 16	Progress	Comment
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	In 2022, in LDCs, 46.7% of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered. No trend data is available	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established LDCs are unlikely to meet the target of 100% by 2030
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	In 2022, 22 LDCs implemented constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information No trend data is available	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	Proportion of LDCs with independent National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles increased from 27.1% in 2015 to 37.5% in 2021	Improvement
16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 17

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
Finance		
17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	LDC total government revenue as a proportion of GDP declined from 34.2% in 2015 to 28.7% in 2021 Proportion of LDC' domestic budget funded by domestic taxes stayed the same between 2015 and 2021 (57.8% in 2015, 57.7% in 2021)	Based on available data and the indicators used, domestic resource mobilization has not been strengthened in LDCs.
17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent	No data is provided on the ODA/GNI share	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries		
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	<p>No baseline data is provided (for the year 2015) for 'official sustainable development grant', 'official concessional sustainable development loans' and 'official non-concessional sustainable development loans', reported data are for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021</p> <p>FDI inflows into LDCs declined from USD 38.1 billion in 2015 to USD 26 billion in 2021</p> <p>Between 2016 and 2021, gross receipts by LDCs of mobilised private finance (USD 1.4 billion to USD3.1billion) and private grants increased (USD 502mln to USD1 billion)</p> <p>Personal remittances (personal transfers and compensation of employees) received as a proportion of total GDP increased from 4.5% in 2015 to 4.74% in 2020. Remittance data is not expressed in monetary terms.</p>	<p>Based on available data and the indicators used, additional financial resources for LDCs since 2015 appear to be mainly remittances. Private grants and mobilized private finance do not make up for the decline in FDI between adoption of the SDGs and 2021</p> <p>This target is formulated in a rather general manner. The question is whether this target can be said to be achieved when 'additional resources' are mobilized while other resources are in decline (e.g. FDI).</p> <p>Furthermore, there is lack of base line data on the different financial resources, including on remittances and sustainable development loans/grants</p> <p>In conclusion, LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established</p>
17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of	LDC's debt service as a proportion of exports of goods, services and primary income increased significantly from 7.6% in 2015 to 11.9% in 2021	Deterioration

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress		
17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	Number of countries with an in force bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with an LDC increased from 101 in 2015 to 102 in 2021	The question is whether the number of countries with an BIT with at least 1 LDC is an adequate measurement of 'investment promotion regime for LDCs' LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
Technology		
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants increased	Arguably, fixed broadband subscriptions does not measure the implementation of SDG 17.6 However, based on the used indicator, LDCs made progress
17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	Amount of tracked exported Environmentally Sound Technologies to LDCs decreased from USD 1.9 billion in 2015 to USD 772 million in 2020 Amount of tracked imported Environmentally Sound Technologies by LDCs decreased from USD 13.3 billion in 2015 to USD 8 billion in 2020	Deterioration
17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	Proportion of individuals using the Internet increased significantly, from 10.7% in 2015 to 36.1% in 2022	Arguably, proportion of individuals using the Internet does not reflect the first part of SDG 17.8 regarding the technology bank However, based on the used indicator, LDCs made progress

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
Capacity-building		
17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation	Total official development assistance (gross disbursements) for technical cooperation in LDCs increased since 2015	Based on the used indicator, LDCs made progress
Trade		
17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	Worldwide weighted preferential and MFN tariff-averages have decreased between 2015 and 2021 MFN tariff averages for agricultural products have increased between 2015 and 2021 (9.5% to 10.1%)	Indicator does not concern the actual conclusion of negotiations under the WTO Doha Development Agenda Arguably, preferential tariffs are not a valid indicator for a 'non-discriminatory' multilateral trading system. Based on data concerning MFN tariffs, trade in agricultural products has been become less open. Nonetheless, based on the indicators used, progress was made on this SDG.
17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	LDC share in services exports decreased from 0.75% in 2015 to 0.57% in 2021 LDC share in merchandise exports increased slightly from 0.91% in 2015 to 1.05% in 2021	Target not met
17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent	Average tariff applied by developed countries on LDC products have remained practically the same since 2015	'Average tariff applied by developed countries' does not appear to have a valid measurement for progress on duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) market access for LDCs. For example, in case of prohibitive tariffs, trade would be zero and the trade weighted tariff

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access		would be zero as well. Obviously in such cases, there is no market access. It also does not measure progress on the 2015 WTO Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Rules of Origin for LDC DFQF schemes. DFQF also applies to developing countries that are in a position to provide tariff preferences to LDCs. Based on the indicator used, LDCs did not make progress
Systemic issues Policy and institutional coherence		
17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence	LDC cash deficit as a proportion of GDP was -2.8% in 2015, no data for more recent years Annual growth of exports of goods and services was negative in 2015 and 2020 Foreign direct investment, net inflows, as a proportion of GDP in 2020 and 2021 were lower compared to 2015 (2% vs 4.1) Annual GDP growth in 2020 and 2021 was lower compared to 2015	Many indicators are linked to this SDG ('Macro economic dashboard'). It is unknown which direction the indicators should be trending for LDCs for SDG 17.13 to be met. Notably on several indicators, LDC progress has been negative. LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established.
17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development	No LDC-specific data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
Multi-stakeholder partnerships		

SDG 17	Progress	Comment
17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries	No trend data (only for year 2018)	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships	No data	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
Data, monitoring and accountability		
17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	In 2022, 28 LDCs had national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, 7 LDCs had a national statistical plan that is fully funded (no baseline data for year 2015 or 2016 is available)	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries	Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in 2020 roughly the same as in 2016 No baseline data nor LDC-specific data on proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration	LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established

ANNEX 2: LDC PROGRESS ON TRADE-RELATED SDGs

Trade related SDG	SDG Target	LDC progress
SDG 2.c	Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	Proportion of LDCs recording abnormally high or moderately high food prices increased from 22% in 2015 to 34.1% in 2021 – deterioration
SDG 3.b	Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	Based on the indicators used, LDCs made progress on this SDG (but indicators and data availability is inadequate)
SDG 8.a	Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries	Aid for Trade has not increased for LDCs
SDG 10.a	Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements	Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries with zero-tariff remained roughly the same (63.8% in 2015, 64.1% in 2021) No improvement
SDG 14.6	14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to	Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing remained 'medium' between 2018 and 2022

Trade related SDG	SDG Target	LDC progress
	illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	Indicator does not concern the actual prohibition of subsidies through the implementation of a legal instrument negotiated the WTO. Progress on this indicator cannot be established In any case, no base line data exists so progress since 2015 cannot be established
SDG 15.7	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	No data – progress cannot be established
SDG 16.4	By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	No data – progress cannot be established
SDG 17.5	Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	Number of countries with an in force bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with an LDC increased from 101 to 102 since 2015. In 2015, most States had an BIT with at least 1 LDC in force and this remains the case in 2021. The question is whether the number of countries with a BIT with at least 1 LDC is an adequate measurement of 'investment promotion regime for LDCs'. LDC progress on this indicator cannot be established
SDG 17.7	Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	Amount of tracked exported Environmentally Sound Technologies to LDCs decreased from USD 1.9 billion in 2015 to USD 772 million in 2020 Amount of tracked imported Environmentally Sound Technologies by LDCs decreased from USD 13.3 billion in 2015 to USD 8 billion in 2020. Based on the indicators used, LDCs progress on this SDG deteriorated
SDG 17.11	Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	LDC share in services exports decreased from 0.75% in 2015 to 0.57% in 2021

Trade related SDG	SDG Target	LDC progress
		<p>LDC share in merchandise exports increased slightly from 0.91% in 2015 to 1.05% in 2021</p> <p>The SDG target is to double the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020, i.e. this target has not met and in fact, LDC's share in global services exports has even declined</p>
SDG 17.12	Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	<p>Average tariff applied by developed countries on LDC products have remained practically the same since 2015.</p> <p>'Average tariff applied by developed countries' does not appear to have a valid measurement for progress on duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) market access for LDCs. For example, in case of prohibitive tariffs, trade would be zero and the trade weighted tariff would be zero as well. Obviously in such cases, there is no market access. It also does not measure progress on the 2015 WTO Nairobi Ministerial Decision on Rules of Origin for LDC DFQF schemes. DFQF also applies to developing countries that are in a position to provide tariff preferences to LDCs.</p> <p>Based on the indicator used, LDCs did not make progress</p>
SDG Targets which are 'global'		
SDG 2.b	Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round	Notified agricultural export subsidies decreased from USD 218 million in 2015 to USD 12 million in 2020
SDG 17.10	Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	<p>Worldwide weighted preferential and MFN tariff-averages have decreased between 2015 and 2021.</p> <p>MFN tariff averages for agricultural products have increased between 2015 and 2021 (9.5% to 10.1%)</p>

Trade related SDG	SDG Target	LDC progress
		<p>Indicator does not concern the actual conclusion of negotiations under the WTO Doha Development Agenda. Based on data concerning MFN tariffs, trade in agricultural products has been become less open. Arguably, preferential tariffs are not a valid indicator for a 'non-discriminatory' multilateral trading system.</p> <p>The question whether the indicators used for this SDG adequately measure progress on this SDG. Nonetheless, based on the indicators used, progress was made on this SDG.</p>

ANNEX 3: TRADE-RELATED SDGs AND INDICATORS USED

Trade related SDG	Target	Indicator(s) used (Annex to UNSG Report for SDG Review Summit & SDG Global Indicator Framework)
SDG 2.b	Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round	Agricultural export subsidies (Millions of current United States dollars) as notified to WTO
SDG 2.c	Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	Proportion of countries recording abnormally high or moderately high food prices
SDG 3.b	Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme (DTP, measles, pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)³⁵, human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines) • Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors • Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis (no data availability)
SDG 8.a	Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries	Total official development assistance for trade, commitments/disbursements
SDG 8.4 / SDG 12.2	SDG 8.4: Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material footprint / Material footprint per capita / Material footprint per unit of GDP (world) • Domestic material consumption / Domestic material consumption per capita / Domestic material consumption per GDP (world and world regions)

³⁵ The Statistical Annex refers to PCV13 but this most likely omits a '1' (PCV3 refers to porcine circovirus 3).

Trade related SDG	Target	Indicator(s) used (Annex to UNSG Report for SDG Review Summit & SDG Global Indicator Framework)
	Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead SDG 12.2: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	Material footprint (MF) is the attribution of global material extraction to final domestic demand of a country. It is calculated as the raw material equivalent of imports plus domestic extraction minus raw material equivalents of exports. Same indicators are used for SDG 12.2
SDG 10.a	Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreement	Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff
SDG 14.6	By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
SDG 15.7	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	Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked
SDG 16.4	By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars) • Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments
SDG 17.5	Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	Number of countries with an in force bilateral investment treaty (BIT) with an LDC
SDG 17.7	Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	Amount of tracked exported/imported/traded Environmentally Sound Technologies

Trade related SDG	Target	Indicator(s) used (Annex to UNSG Report for SDG Review Summit & SDG Global Indicator Framework)
SDG 17.10	Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	Worldwide weighted tariff-average of all products (MFN and preferential) and by sector (agriculture, arms, clothing, industrial products, oil, textile)
SDG 17.11	Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of global services exports of LDCs and other world regions • Share of global merchandise exports of LDCs and other world regions • Share of global service imports of LDCs and other world regions • Share of global merchandise imports of LDCs and other world regions
SDG 17.12	Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average tariff applied by developed countries on all products and some product groups from developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, under the Most-favoured-nation (MFN) status • Average tariff applied by developed countries on all products and some product groups products from developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, under the preferential status

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