

World's poorest and most vulnerable countries look to advance strategies for graduating from least developed country status

Capacity Development Workshop and LDC Graduation, Beijing, China, 10-12 November

New York, 1 November – Government policymakers from 16 least developed countries (LDCs) and one graduate, Samoa, will gather in Beijing, China, from 10-12 November to discuss strategies needed to successfully graduate from LDC status and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

LDCs are the world's most vulnerable nations, and are confronting severe impediments to sustainable development. There are 48 LDCs: 34 in Africa, 13 in Asia and the Pacific and 1 in Latin America. More than 880 million people (about 12 per cent of world population) live in LDCs, yet these countries account for less than 2 per cent of world GDP and about 1 per cent of global trade in goods.

The LDC designation enables these countries to benefit from special international support, particularly in the areas of trade and development assistance. Membership of the category is reviewed every three years by the UN expert team—the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), based on three criteria: per capita gross national income (GNI), human assets and vulnerability to external shocks.

To be considered eligible for graduation, LDCs must meet two of the three criteria or exceed double the per capita income criteria for two consecutive triennial reviews of the CDP. Several countries have progressed to the point where they are expected to graduate from LDC status in coming years.

During the Beijing meeting, government policymakers will discuss the importance of enhancing their capacity to produce goods and services as well as related national policy measures for successful LDC graduation and sustainable development.

The 16 participating LDCs are: Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Myanmar, Nepal, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda and Vanuatu. LDCs likely to graduate in coming years will present their graduation strategies, and other countries will discuss their possible LDC graduation options. In addition to these countries, Samoa as a recent graduate will share its experiences with future graduates.

Participants will also engage in discussions led by Justin Yifu Lin, head of the Centre for New Structural Economics and former World Bank Chief Economist. The Growth Identification and Facilitation Framework (GIFF) enables LDCs to identify goods and services for trade which have potential to contribute to growth. This framework has already been applied in countries including Bhutan, Nepal and Uganda.

Participants will explore a graduation diagnostics toolkit, aimed at helping countries clarify the LDC graduation procedure and remove some of the uncertainty surrounding the process.



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“It will be an excellent chance for LDCs to learn from each other’s experiences and to give them insight into a practical method for understanding productive capacity,” said Dr. Daniel Gay, Inter-Regional Adviser with the CDP Secretariat, in the Development Policy and Analysis Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The workshop will be organized by the CDP Secretariat in conjunction with the Beijing Centre for New Structural Economics. The Commonwealth Secretariat is co-sponsoring the event.

For more information on LDCs and the CDP, please visit the websites:

<http://www.un.org/ldcportal/>

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/>

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