



Additional matters related to the least developed countries *

Summary

The Committee considered the ongoing preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and noted the agreement by Member States on the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries. It highlighted the need to start the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action on an expedited basis. In that regard, the Committee reviewed the progress in developing the integrated sustainable graduation support facility, now called iGRAD, and notes a scaling-up of the iGRAD pilot

with an additional seven countries in 2022. It stressed the urgency of operationalizing the facility in 2022 and the importance of coordination and resource mobilization support from Member States and the wider international community. The Committee expressed its concern at the ongoing devastating socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 on the least developed countries and committed itself to carefully considering the impacts in all its upcoming work on those countries.

Graduation support facility

The Committee appreciates that the Doha Programme of Action welcomes the establishment of the integrated sustainable graduation support facility, iGRAD, which is the country-led and partnership-based global platform of dedicated capacity development support for countries moving up and out of the least developed country category. It recommends that the Council call

upon Member States and the wider international community to support resource mobilization efforts to operationalize iGRAD. Such a country-led graduation support mechanism would be an important element in enabling countries to achieve graduation with momentum.

Information on international support for the least developed countries

The Committee recommends that the Council call upon United Nations system organizations and Member States to disseminate information on the support measures they extend specifically to the countries in the least developed country category, as well as

information on support to countries that are graduating from the category, through the Least Developed Country Portal – International Support Measures for Least Developed Countries.¹

¹ See www.un.org/ldcportal; the information should be submitted to ldcportal@un.org.

* Excerpt from Committee for Development Policy, Report on the twenty-fourth session, See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2022, Supplement No. 13 (E/2022/33)

The Committee welcomes the significant progress made towards graduation from the least developed country category over the past decade, with more than a third of the least developed countries in various formal stages of the graduation process, and acknowledges the new target of the new Doha Programme of Action to enable another 15 of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031. However, the Committee is deeply concerned that a significant number of least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, will remain far behind and struggle to achieve graduation.

The least developed countries, their development and trading partners and the international community should translate the Doha Programme of Action into the adoption and, most importantly, the implementation of concrete policies and activities. Experience has shown that if countries lack the capability of implementing the “right” policies, those policies will fail to achieve the desired objectives.

The Committee reiterates its previous findings that lack of productive capacity is among the main root causes of the underdevelopment of least developed countries. It therefore recommends that priority be given to those elements of the Doha Programme of Action that enable the least developed countries to expand productive capacities for sustainable development. Those efforts should ensure that modalities of international support and concrete deliverables take the heterogeneity of the least developed countries into account, so that no least developed country is left behind.

The Committee remains highly concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the development of the least developed countries, which often face the most severe socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and the recovery.² It reconfirms that it will pay close attention to COVID-19 impacts when holding consultations in the context of the monitoring of graduating and graduated countries (see chaps. V–VI) and the preparations for the 2024 triennial review. It will also consider this issue in its upcoming 2023 review of the least developed country criteria and their application procedures. As in the past, the Committee will make refinements to the current methodological approaches and criteria used to classify countries as least developed countries, if deemed necessary, within the scope of its mandates and longstanding principles.

The Committee is looking forward to reviewing, at its next plenary, preliminary drafts of the graduation assessments for the countries to be considered for graduation at the 2024 triennial review, as outlined in its

2021 report to the Council (E/2021/33, chap. VI.B). This will provide an opportunity for the Committee to identify any other issues that may require further analysis in order to successfully conduct the next triennial review.

The Committee also reviewed the progress made in developing the integrated sustainable graduation support facility, now called iGRAD, which the Committee had suggested in 2019 (E/2019/33, para. 76). It appreciates the inclusion of iGRAD in the Doha Programme of Action as a country-led support mechanism established by the Committee for Development Policy secretariat of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as Chair of the inter-agency task force on graduation and smooth transition. The Committee welcomed the iGRAD partnerships initiated by its secretariat with non-United Nations entities, including the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Cooperation, on production transformation policy reviews in graduating least developed countries. Strengthened United Nations coordination, new partnerships with non-United Nations entities and support with resource mobilization efforts from Member States and the wider international community will be necessary to operationalize iGRAD and to fulfil commitments to graduating and graduated countries for sustainable graduation in the decade of action.

The Committee reiterates the importance of sharing accurate information on the least developed country graduation process, including the least developed country criteria. It highlights the recent Least Developed Country Handbook published in 2021 together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs⁵ and notes the increased availability of graduation-related data on the Committee’s website.⁶ It invites the least developed countries to make use of this information in their preparations for graduation and, in that regard, calls upon relevant United Nations entities to assist the least developed countries in those efforts. It also welcomes the recent revisions to the least developed country portal and invites all countries and stakeholders to provide the necessary information on the provision and utilization of support measures. This would facilitate a reduction in the information barriers that impede the utilization of international support measures.

² Committee for Development Policy, *Comprehensive Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Least Developed Country Category*, April 2021.