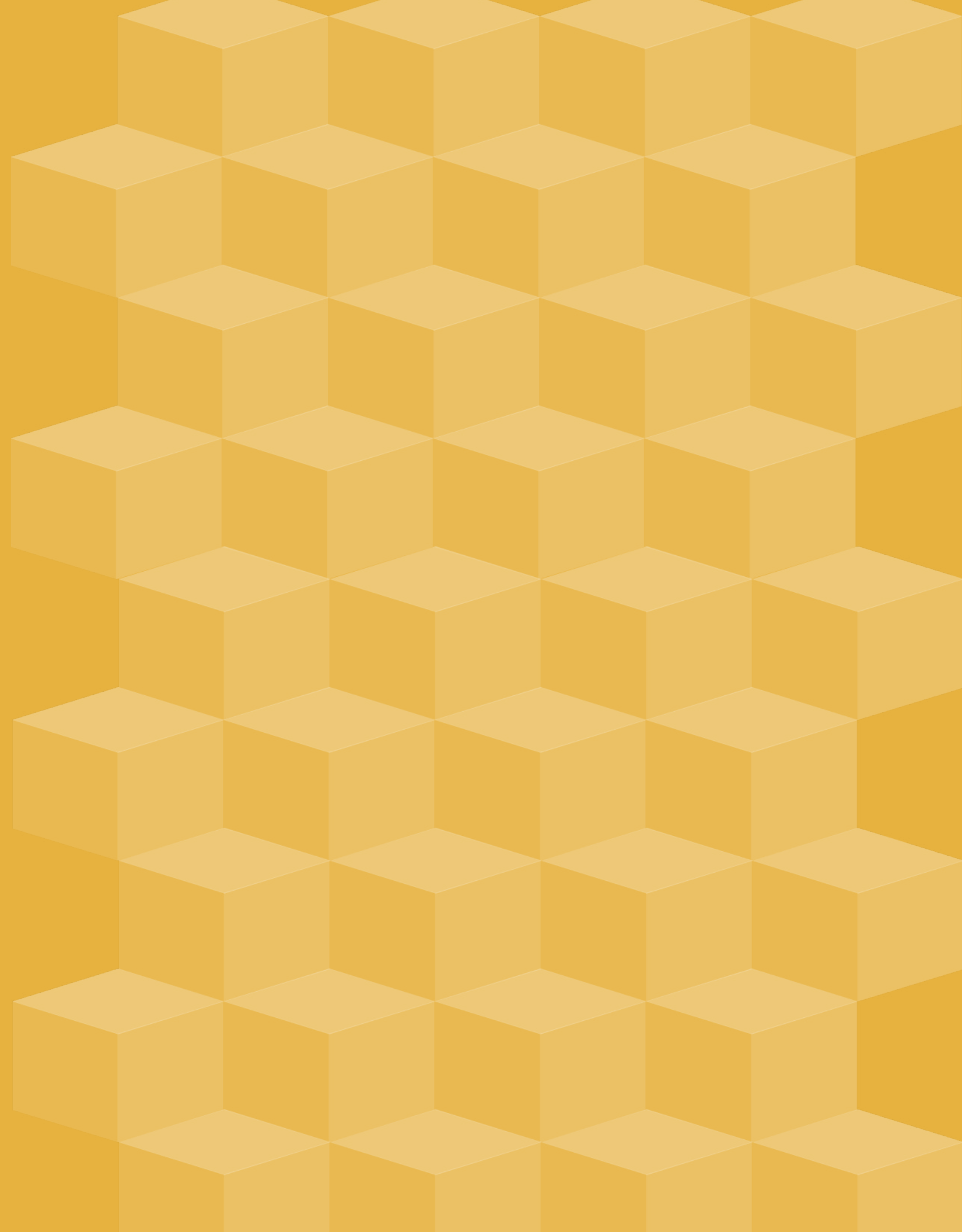


# **SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS**





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## Exploring the expansion of social protection in Africa

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many African countries expanded their use of social protection measures to curb the socioeconomic impacts. In its March 2021 policy brief, **Social Policy**

and Social Protection Measures to Build Africa Better Post-Covid-19, UN DESA highlighted the critical need for further investments in social protection to help African nations to build back better and stronger, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and urges development partners to support these efforts, particularly for the poorest countries with limited fiscal space. A commentary on the brief and its findings was featured in the UN's African Renewal magazine.

## Advocating for special attention to the most vulnerable countries in the G20's response and recovery

Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin supported the Secretary-General's engagement at the Group of 20 (G20) as the UN G20 Sherpa. UN DESA convened the UN G20 Working Group with a view to bringing a strategic and coherent approach to policy deliberations.

UN DESA worked closely with the G20 Presidencies (Saudi Arabia and Italy) and consistently brought to the G20's attention the Secretary-General's call of: i) Redoubling efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19; ii) Mobilizing resources for the COVID-19 response and recovery; iii) Achieving a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future beyond COVID-19; and iv) Tackling climate change to achieve a carbon-neutral and sustainable world.

These continuous and effective engagements have helped raise awareness among G20 members of the importance of stronger reference to multilateral action, the 75th anniversary of the UN as well as the 2030 Agenda, which were reflected in the 2020 G20 Leaders Declaration. The Riyadh G20 Summit took place virtually from 20-21 November 2020.



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In the Summit communique, G20 countries pledged to take all necessary measures to fight back the pandemic, making concrete commitments in health and socioeconomic response, including scaling up its support for Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) initiative and COVAX. The declaration also presents avenues towards a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery for all.





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# Supporting LDC graduation

As the Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy, UN DESA updates the official data for the Least Developed Countries (LDC) criteria. The Department obtains data from international agencies, and uses it to calculate criteria scores.

Despite limited statistical capacity in many LDCs and other developing countries, UN DESA seeks to ensure data coverage for all 143 developing countries and all 15 LDC

indicators. Once the data indicates sufficient and sustained progress against the criteria, LDCs may start the process to graduate from the LDC status. In 2021 three additional countries were recommended for graduation. LDC criteria are also used, together with other criteria, to allocate ODA. UN DESA also published data fact sheets for all LDCs from the 2021 triennial review, updated time series estimates of the latest LDC criteria, and released a new set of supplementary graduation indicators.

Facilitated Online Capacity Development Training

# Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Region

Capacity Development Webinar Series

## Promoting integrated digital government

Through a development account project, UN DESA is working with two landlocked LDCs (Bhutan and Lao PDR) and two Pacific SIDS (Fiji and Vanuatu) on institutional arrangements for policy integration, coordination and stakeholder engagement in SDG implementation and reviews in Asia and the Pacific. The focus is to support the transition from analog silos in public administration towards innovation and integrated digital government for public service delivery.

In Lao PDR, UN DESA is supporting an incremental digital approach to support One-Door-Service Centers. In Fiji, UN DESA supported implementation of their Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee to count on digital improvements to highlight inter-Ministerial dialogue and workflows.

The project also supported the development of a Digital Government Capability Assessment (DGCA) which was pilot tested with 14 Caribbean countries.

## Taking caribbean public service delivery into the digital future

UN DESA, in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), organized a series of 10 training webinars on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development that engaged 14 Caribbean countries. The Virtual Training on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean resulted in ideas for regional cooperation with concrete follow-up actions such as the creation of a virtual Regional Innovation Lab for Innovation and Digital Government in the Caribbean, with support from CARICAD and CARICOM. In view of COVID-19, the Webinar Series was an adaptation of the Toolkit on Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery developed as part of UN DESA's Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs.



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## Promoting integrated approaches to sustainable development: Climate, Land, Energy and Water Systems

UN DESA is collaborating with UNDP to deliver a capacity development programme to support the adoption of integrated approaches to policy formulation for sustainable development by countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including countries in special situations. In 2020-2021, Bhutan, Mongolia and Nepal participated in the programme and began use of the Climate, Land, Energy and Water Systems (CLEWS) tool in support of policy coherence in these areas. The inherent flexibility of CLEWS, as a quantitative modeling tool, facilitates adaption and tailoring of the analysis to the unique situation, priorities and circumstances of each country.

## Supporting the poorest and most vulnerable countries in responding to the crisis and getting on track for the SDGs:

UN DESA supported the organization of the special meeting of the ECOSOC President on SIDS and LDCs, in cooperation with OHRLLS. The special meeting contributed to the 18 June meeting of the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, aimed at providing an input to the upcoming LDC5 Conference. Those meetings resulted in important messages on the continuing support to countries in special situations, paving the ground for an ambitious outcome at LDC5 and the continuing work to address the multi-dimensional vulnerability of SIDS.

## Building country capacity for monitoring implementation of the 2030 agenda: Namibia and Cabo Verde

UN DESA provided capacity building support to national VNR processes at the request of Cabo Verde and Namibia. In Cabo Verde, UN DESA collaborated with the



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Resident Coordinator's Office to organize a capacity-building workshop focusing on the process, good practices and tools to support the engagement of stakeholders in the VNR process and on how to feature the information in the report to be presented at the HLPF. In Namibia, UN DESA worked with the Resident Coordinator's Officer and the National SDG Multi-Stakeholder Committee for handling the SDGs Agenda to support preparation of the country's second VNR. Before the report was produced, UN DESA participated in the discussions on improving the report, through sharing best practices and lessons learned.



Latin America and the Caribbean 1 Africa 33 Asia 9 Oceania 3



Countries in the LDC category after the 2021 triennial review

## Supporting LDCs beyond graduation

UN DESA designed an LDC Graduation Support Facility to address graduation concerns by Member States. The Department piloted five of the six main service offerings of the Facility in Vanuatu, which graduated out of the LDC category in December 2020 - the first to do so in the midst of COVID-19. The Facility strengthened the capacity of government officials to prepare and engage

in trade negotiations on extending trade preferences and preferential market access for specific export commodities to Japan and China. Working with ESCAP, UN DESA helped Vanuatu to mainstream its smooth transition strategy into its national plans, fiscal budget, and monitoring and reporting processes.

**We wish to acknowledge the invaluable backing from UNESCAP, UN DESA, UNCTAD, EU, the Government of Australia, New Zealand and those development partners who supported the development of our Smooth Transition Strategy. With their support, Vanuatu will transition smoothly beyond graduation – with new vigour, new thinking and new pathways of development and partnerships towards equality, resilience and environmental sustainability.**

Excerpt from Statement by Hon. Marc Ati (MP), Vanuatu Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade, at the UN ESCAP 77th Commission Session.