

**Third United Nations Conference on the
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**

UNLDC-III



**PRE-CONFERENCE
EVENT**



**Workshop on LDCs: Building Capacities for Mainstreaming Gender in
Development Strategies**

March 21-23, 2001

HOSTED BY: THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPONSORED BY: SWEDEN, DENMARK, FINLAND, JAPAN & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Background

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-III) in response to the persistent socio-economic underdevelopment of these countries and their continued marginalization in the global economy and world trade. The primary objective of the Conference is to agree on a new agenda and a course of action for the sustainable development of LDCs and for their beneficial integration into the global economy. The European Union will host the Conference in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001.

Consensus is growing that in order to combat poverty, and move towards sustainable development, it is critical that *both men and women* be empowered to contribute. Ongoing discussions on gender mainstreaming underline the importance of men's contribution to achieve gender equality—not only in the context of their own rights to development but also in creating a supportive environment for the advancement of women and for increasing welfare and economic growth in the LDCs.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into policies and programmes is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and have the same pre-conditions to take advantage of market opportunities.

1997 ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions

As part of the preparation for LDC-III, there will be a series of pre-conference events, including the workshop on "LDCs: Building Capacities for Mainstreaming Gender in Development Strategies". The Republic of South Africa will host the Workshop.

Purpose

Women are one of Africa's hidden growth reserves, providing most of the region's labor, but their productivity is hampered by widespread inequalities in education and access. Thus gender equality can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction.

"Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?" World Bank

- To highlight the linkages between gender, poverty reduction and growth and therefore the necessity to mainstream gender, in LDCs' national development strategies, policies and programmes; and
- To identify actions/areas for building capacity in the LDCs in order to empower them to mainstream gender, specifically focusing on poverty reduction and trade.

Expected Outcome

1. Greater awareness and appreciation of the link between gender, poverty and growth; and
2. A report including:
 - examples of LDCs' progress with gender mainstreaming and their capacity limitations;
 - recommendations to the LDCs on how to more effectively mainstream the gender perspective into their national policy and programmes;
 - recommendations on areas for capacity building technical assistance.

The aim of the report will be to provide a meaningful input regarding gender into :

1. the Global Program of Action for the LDC III;
2. selected interactive debates during the LDC III ;
3. selected parallel events/round tables organized during LDC III ;

Participants

The workshop will be attended primarily by policy makers and gender experts from the Ministries of Finance and Trade of LDCs, members of the LDC III Bureau, other interested UNCTAD member States, organizations of the UN system, academia and other international organizations. Other observers will also be invited, such as NGOs, private-sector representatives, and journalists. The number of participants will not exceed 150, and to ensure participation by the LDCs a limited amount of funding will be available for financing one participant per LDC.

Organization

The meeting will last two and half days and will be held in Cape Town. The meeting will be Chaired by Mrs. Hendricks, Deputy Minister of Trade, South Africa, keynote speakers will include Mrs. Mbeki, the first lady of South Africa and the founder of Women's Development Bank of South Africa, and Mrs. Kazibwe, Vice-President of Uganda¹, and the discussion will be focused on the linkages between Growth, Poverty Eradication and Gender Equality. The first day will also include presentations and exchanges of experiences with Engendering National Budgets.

The second day's discussion will be on Trade and Gender. This session will be addressed by Mr. Alec Erwin, Minister of Trade, South Africa, and will include presentations by NGOs and discussions on measuring the impact of trade liberalization on gender. The above discussions will be complemented with discussions on capacity building specifically focusing on Engendering National Statistics.

On the first two days a multimedia presentation by the secretariat will follow the opening statements and keynote speeches to set the stage for discussions and debates.

The last day will be dedicated to preparing and finalizing the recommendations and input into the LDC III global programme of action, which should include policy recommendations and capacity building suggestions.

Any agency wishing to make a presentation at the meeting is requested to make available to the secretariat a copy of its presentation, including any transparencies or slides, in advance. **Simultaneous interpretation** will be ensured in two languages (English and French).

Parallel events

During the workshop various **organizations will be able display their documents** and separate parallel sessions, if requested well in advance, could be organized to allow those agencies wishing to **present their programmes**, in particular their capacity building projects, to do so.

Parallel events focused on demonstrating the social issues related to gender equity, including possibly a film, a debate and art exhibitions, to complement the day's debates could be organized. Suggestions, contributions and assistance in organizing such events are welcome and encouraged which should be addressed to the secretariat as soon as possible - please see contact persons.

¹ To be confirmed

Practical Arrangements

The exact venue of the Workshop and hotel arrangements will be communicated later. Meetings will be from **9.00 to 18.00** on 21 and 22 March and from **9.00 to 13.00 on 23 March**.

All participants are requested to complete the registration form and to give prior notice if they need assistance with visas or accommodation.

Enclosures

Included in this package are the draft annotated agenda, registration form, and the Announcement of the meeting.

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