



UNCTAD XIII

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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LEVEL
HIGH

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2011–2020: GRADUATION AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

24 APRIL 2012, 3–6 p.m.

BACKGROUND

As agreed in May 2011, the overarching goal of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2011–2020, known as the Istanbul Programme of Action, is “to overcome the structural challenges faced by least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category”. The aim is to enable half the LDCs to reach the criteria for graduation by 2020. This goal is expected to be achieved through national policy actions and international support, which focus on (a) achieving sustained, equitable and inclusive economic growth in LDCs of at least 7 per cent per annum; (b) building human capacities; (c) reducing the vulnerability of LDCs to economic shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and strengthening their resilience; (d) ensuring enhanced financial resources and their effective use and (e) ensuring good governance at all levels.

A striking feature of the Istanbul Programme of Action is the greater importance given – for the first time – to building the productive base of the economies of the LDCs, promoting structural transformation and the commitment for half of the LDCs to reach the criteria of graduation by 2020. These are ambitious goals, especially the intention to accelerate graduation from LDC status. It will be necessary to scale up efforts at both the national and international levels, and to make significant progress in the development of productive capacities and structural changes to ensure that half of the LDCs meet the graduation criteria during the current decade.

PURPOSE

The high-level event on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action during the UNCTAD XIII Conference in Doha, Qatar, will address the challenges associated with graduation from LDCs status and the actions that both the LDCs and their development partners need to take to ensure a smooth transition within the agreed timetable. The event will discuss broad issues of graduation and respond to key questions. Will the LDCs continue to play a marginal role in the world economy? Is it realistic to expect half of the LDCs to meet the graduation criteria by 2020, given the present conditions of the world economy and the outlook for the next several years? Is the business-as-usual approach to policymaking sufficient to place the LDCs on the path of more dynamic and inclusive development and enable half of them to meet the graduation criteria by 2020?

OUTCOME

The outcome document will be in the form of a summary containing policy conclusions. This will help identify key issues regarding graduation and a smooth transition for follow-up work by UNCTAD in collaboration with other United Nations agencies. This should be complementary to the work envisaged by the General Assembly through the Ad hoc working group to further study and strengthen the smooth transition process for the countries graduating from the least developed country category pursuant to the Istanbul Programme of Action.

ORGANIZATION

The Special High-level Event will be in a Davos-style round table composed of Heads of State, government ministers and senior government officials from selected LDCs, as well as heads of relevant United Nations and other international organizations. Selected LDCs are expected to take this opportunity to bring to the event their initial graduation strategy, detailing remaining hurdles in their development processes, how they mobilize their efforts and the level of international support measures they require to meet those challenges.

AGENDA

The Special High-Level Event will respond to the following questions: (a) What are the major obstacles to graduation from the LDC category? (b) What should be key components of a smooth transition strategy for graduating LDCs? How long is “reasonable” for a smooth transition? (c) What will be the role of South–South and triangular cooperation to help LDCs meet the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action? How can the benefits of South–South cooperation be maximized for the development of LDCs and their eventual graduation from the group? (d) How can commodities serve as a lever for development and help LDCs meet the graduation criteria by 2020?

DOCUMENTS

Issues note TD /455

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