

United Nations Conference Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

15th Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Commodities and Development

14-16 October 2024, Geneva

**General Statement of the Least Developed
Countries (LDCs) Group**

(on 14 October 2024)

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

Draft as of 13 Oct 2024

**Least Developed Countries Group
G E N E V A**

**General Statement of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Group
at the Fifteenth Session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Commodities and
Development**

14-16 October 2024 | Palais des Nations Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Chair,

Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Madame Rebeca Grynspan,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. The LDCs Group congratulates Excellencies President and Vice-President from Chile and Congo respectively for the election and assures the group's best cooperation.
2. The Group aligns with the statement delivered by Cambodia on behalf of G77 and China.
3. The Group thanks the UNCTAD secretariat for the background notes.
4. The Group also thanks Madame Rebeca Grynspan for her succinct opening remarks.

Ms. Chair,

5. As highlighted in the UNCTAD report, domestic value addition is pivotal in building resilient and diversified economies, particularly for commodity-dependent developing countries. It helps to mitigate the impacts of price volatility and external market fluctuations in which the commodity dependent countries have least control and role.
6. This transition promises increased revenue, job creation, and technological advancement - all crucial elements for our sustainable development.

7. Moreover, value addition can enhance our international competitiveness and position us more favorably in global markets. The green and digital transitions offer new opportunities in commodity value chains, particularly for products that support decarbonization and digitalization. These emerging sectors present avenues for LDCs to leapfrog into more advanced stages of economic development.
8. However, we face significant gaps in achieving diversification and value addition including limited human capital and skilled workforce, inadequate infrastructure, particularly in transportation, energy, and telecommunications, insufficient access to finance and investment capital, weak linkages to regional and global value chains, limited technological capabilities and access to innovation and challenges in meeting international standards and certifications, among others.
9. The report has discovered, based on ground implementation, the expected policy regime to address these gaps and harness the full potential of value addition like:
 - a. Develop comprehensive national strategies for value addition and diversification, aligned with broader development plans.
 - b. Invest heavily in human capital development through education, vocational training, and partnerships with universities and industry.
 - c. Prioritize infrastructure development, particularly in transportation, energy, and telecommunications, to support value-added activities.
 - d. Design financial instruments that provide affordable credit and investment capital to businesses engaged in value addition, with a focus on supporting MSMEs.
 - e. Strengthen regional cooperation and integration to amplify the impact of domestic value addition initiatives and enhance collective bargaining power in international markets.
 - f. Develop robust environmental and social safeguards to ensure sustainable and inclusive value addition processes.
10. We call upon our development partners and the international community to support these efforts through:
 - a. Facilitating technology transfer and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

- b. Supporting regional capacity-building centers focused on industries crucial for value addition.
 - c. Turbocharge international investment in infrastructure to improve connectivity and reduce logistics costs.
 - d. Providing technical assistance in adopting international standards and certifications for sustainable production practices.
 - e. Ensuring that trade agreements include provisions supporting value addition initiatives in LDCs, such as favorable rules of origin and local content criteria.
 - f. Enhanced continuous support to the LDCs post-graduation until they acquire structural stability and sustainability for irreversible and smooth transition.
11. We also call upon UNCTAD and to Madame Secretary General to seek alternative sources of funding including those set up for LDCs and enhance UNCTAD's support to the LDCs.
12. With regard to the recent trends in commodity markets, LDCs are concerned with the inflating geopolitical and trade uncertainties which have tolled upon supply chain and stable economic progress of countries. We reiterate any policies undertaken by any countries should factor the long-term sustainability of the international and domestic economies particularly that of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, which have the highest level of commodity dependence. Climate change, currency depreciation and absence of economic safety nets further exacerbates this peril. We hope the pact of the future, adopted with high aspirations would be able to meaningfully contribute to the sustainable development of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS through the synergistic collaboration among countries and stakeholders.
13. In conclusion, we, the LDCs, recognize the transformative potential of value addition and diversification for our economies. However, realizing this potential requires concerted efforts at both national and international levels.

I thank you Mr. President.