

**Economic and Social Council**  
**High-Level Segment General Debate**  
**Statement of the Committee for Development Policy**  
**to the Economic and Social Council**  
**by**  
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**Chairperson of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP)**  
**New York, 16 July 2019**

Madam President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to report on the twenty-first session of the Committee for Development Policy.

The Committee met in plenary session in New York from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of March. It addressed the annual theme of the Economic and Social Council for 2019, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, and numerous issues relating to the least developed countries (LDCs). The Committee also continued its analysis of the voluntary national reviews.

Madam President,

On the ECOSOC theme, the Committee stressed that current levels of inequality observed both within and between countries are unacceptable and unsustainable. Not only are people left behind: many are being pushed behind. Environmental degradation and the climate crisis are a major problem disempowering the most vulnerable.

With little more than a decade left for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is an urgent need for a transformation grounded in equality, inclusion and human rights, one that empowers those at risk of being left or pushed behind and addresses the mechanisms that enable the concentration of wealth and power at the top.

This transformation requires a new vision of the role of States in shaping the way public and private spheres interact, how rules are set and how policy is made. We need to redesign tax systems, develop new models for the delivery of public services, adopt novel industrial policies and create innovative intellectual property rights regimes based on a comprehensive vision of stakeholders. Development strategies, policies, legal frameworks and public institutions need to acknowledge and be responsive to the severe degrees and multiple dimensions of inequality.

This means, first of all, that policies and strategies for the development of productive capacity should put equality and inclusion at the centre. These policies must acknowledge and address the wide disparities among workers in skills, capacities and access to formal job markets; and among firms in terms of capacities and access to technology and finance. Failure to do so may mean that innovation and technological development will create further gaps and push people behind.

People and communities must also be able to effectively use formal instruments to ensure the exercise of their rights at national and local levels. Effective and equitable access to justice and meaningful

participation in economic, social and political decisions requires not only the adoption and implementation of formal rules and mechanisms, but also the provision of skills, technical support and other enabling factors.

In this context, while the current multilateral system needs reform in order to respond to a changing global landscape and to the ambitions of the SDGs, it is important to defend the principle of multilateralism, including the commitment to the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. Multilateralism is vital in defending the rights and interests of the poorest and most vulnerable people and nations, including through equitable trading and financial systems, and appropriate mechanisms of international tax cooperation. In response to these challenges, the Committee has embarked on a work programme on the crisis of multilateralism and the future of development policy.

Madam President, distinguished delegates,

In compliance with its longstanding mandate related to the LDCs, the CDP addressed numerous issues relating to these countries.

I would like to focus today on the recommendations for the programme of action for LDCs for the decade 2021-2030. Professor Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Vice-Chair of the CDP, has already reported to ECOSOC on the outcome of our deliberations on the other important LDC issues.

The next decade will be crucial for the LDCs. Several LDCs have made remarkable progress over the current decade and are approaching graduation from the category, but too many LDCs are still at risk of being left behind. Global trends are not favourable and the threats to multilateralism are a threat to their development.

First, the new programme of action must be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and integrate, in particular, the principle of leaving no one behind.

Second, the CDP strongly recommends that the new programme of action should adopt as its organizing framework the expansion of productive capacity for sustainable development. The lack of sufficient development progress in many LDCs is rooted in their limited productive capacity. Whereas the current Programme of Action lists productive capacity as the first of eight priority areas, it fails to harness the intrinsic linkages between the different areas.

The Committee's work in recent years on expanding productive capacity for sustainable development provides an integrated framework with a sound conceptual basis. It has identified four main elements at the domestic level: (a) building development governance capabilities; (b) creating positive synergies between productive capacities and social outcomes; (c) establishing appropriate macroeconomic and financial frameworks; and (d) developing industrial and sectoral policies that promote technological upgrading and structural transformation. A fifth key element is international support for the integration of LDCs into the global economy by providing preferential market access and easing supply-side constraints, transfer of and access to technology and knowledge, resilience-building, and support for social sectors.

Third, the monitoring and review mechanism of the new programme of action should take advantage of synergies with the follow-up and review mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including the voluntary national reviews.

The availability of data remains a critical issue in this regard. Accordingly, a fourth recommendation is that the new programme of action include a focus on capacity-building for the collection, processing and

analysis of disaggregated data, and strengthen accountability, including through provisions for effectively integrating civil society and other non-State actors in the associated processes.

Fifth, the programme of action should take into account the implications of significant changes in the composition of the LDC category over the next decade, in particular the geographical concentration of LDCs in sub-Saharan Africa and the prevalence of conflict and post-conflict situations.

Sixth, the programme of action should emphasize support to graduating countries. The Committee observed that a realistic but ambitious graduation objective for the next decade could be ensuring that an additional third of the remaining LDCs meet the criteria for the first time. Further improving the graduation process would help reduce uncertainty regarding impacts and put in place effective smooth transition strategies.

Finally, the programme of action should strengthen the means to increase resilience to economic and environmental vulnerabilities. The CDP reiterated its concern that most LDCs, including those approaching graduation, remained highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks, including those associated with climate change. In this respect, the Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring effective access of LDCs to environmental and climate financing to address country-specific vulnerabilities, and reiterated its proposal to use the economic vulnerability index and/or other appropriate criteria to allocate development cooperation resources.

Madam President,

The Committee continued its analysis of the voluntary national reviews. Our analysis aims at improving the effectiveness of the VNRs and at facilitating the sharing of experiences among countries. The Committee found that the reviews are a valuable innovation but, in our view, they can be strengthened through the inclusion of more detailed information of national strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

For example, in regard to the central principle of leaving no one behind, there is a clear need for further work and the sharing of experiences in translating the principle into practice. Hence, more reviews need to provide information on how countries are concretely working towards transformation and how they are bringing together different policy areas in an integrated manner. Beyond issues of social protection, they need to address the role of macroeconomic, productive sector and technology policies. Beyond highlighting the need for participation of the most vulnerable in decision-making, they need to discuss participatory mechanisms that are or have been implemented, and assess their effectiveness.

The reviews would also be more effective if they were comprehensive, reflecting the interconnected character of the Agenda and the interdependence of the SDGs, and if they included analysis of the impacts of domestic policy on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in other countries.

Madam President, distinguished delegates,

The Committee for Development Policy renews its full commitment to support the Council and Member States in the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you for your attention.