



United Nations

Committee for Development Policy

**Report on the twenty-seventh session
(24–28 February 2025)**

Economic and Social Council

Official Records, 2025

Supplement No. 13



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United Nations • New York, 2025

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Summary

The present report contains the main findings and recommendations of the Committee for Development Policy at its twenty-seventh session.

As its contribution to the theme of the 2025 session of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee addressed new contexts and pathways for development. Several structural shifts have changed the foundational assumptions on which development policy is based. These shifts include the breaching of multiple planetary boundaries; geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts; increasing inequalities, including of access to the global commons and natural capital; significant technological changes, particularly artificial intelligence; a weakening role of the State; and a decline in commitments to norms and values underpinning the international order. Generally, convergence in economic, human and social development has not been the norm and advances remain fragile in the face of what are expected to be increasingly frequent and severe climate-related and other shocks. However, many developing countries have seen significant improvements regarding poverty and important aspects of health and education. These achievements need to be made more visible to inspire action. Metrics matter, and an excessive focus on relative poverty reduction obscures the very tangible achievements made by many countries in the reduction of poverty in all of its forms and dimensions over the past decades, particularly on the African continent. The potential of trade as an engine for sustainable development and structural transformation has not fully materialized, with least developed countries still far from the Sustainable Development Goal 17 target of doubling their share in global exports. The capacity of many developing countries to advance towards the Goals has been limited by large debt burdens, an unreasonably high cost of borrowing, and limited capacity to mobilize domestic resources. Moreover, many developing countries are not well equipped in terms of capacities in science, technology and innovation to take advantage of the opportunities presented by technological advances for development. Against this backdrop, the Committee emphasized the need for a strong and effective multilateralism that acknowledges and responds to the asymmetries in needs and capabilities, supports domestic policy action and guarantees policy and fiscal space. Effective multilateralism also requires pragmatic agreements and innovative approaches that advance the reduction of poverty, respond to interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations in an integrated manner, and leave no one behind. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions remains the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement of sustainable development. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development provide unique windows of opportunity for a strong, pragmatic and innovative multilateral response.

The Committee initiated its review of the framework for graduation from the least developed country category, building on its experience and lessons learned on least developed country issues over the past five decades. The need to support least developed countries in transforming their economies towards sustainable development by better integrating themselves into the global economy remains as pressing at present as it was in the past. Despite remarkable progress by several least developed countries towards graduation primarily over the past two decades, the difficulties of many to advance their development and the challenges that they face because of the structural shifts outlined above require a renewed consideration and continuous emphasis by the international community. This endeavour needs to include a focus on support for countries that have so far been unable to benefit substantially from existing international support measures. In parallel to this work on the overall effectiveness of support to least developed countries, there is also a need to update

the procedures for graduation to reduce uncertainty and increase the transparency of current and upcoming graduation processes. The Committee developed a series of proposals so that the procedures can address the various disruptions that graduation processes may entail. While some of the proposals can be implemented by the Committee within its existing mandates, several others could be considered within a process to update the existing resolutions on smooth transition from the least developed country category.

In its enhanced monitoring of countries that are graduating or have graduated from the category, the Committee reviewed the development progress of two recently graduated countries and six graduating countries. Expressing concern over the limited national capacity of these countries to address various challenges, including those stemming from multiple global crises, less affordable finance, geopolitical tensions, and climate change, the Committee underscored the importance of addressing these issues with continued support from trading and development partners, including United Nations entities.

The Committee welcomed the positive feedback and increased and active participation of countries in the enhanced monitoring mechanism and encouraged continued progress in reporting on the preparation and implementation of smooth transition strategies. It reviewed the structure and operation of the mechanism and proposes further improvements and clarifications to better address the needs of graduating and graduated countries.

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Chapter I

Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

The need for strengthened multilateralism in a new development context

1. As the United Nations approaches its eightieth anniversary, it finds itself at a crossroads that requires an unequivocal reaffirmation of the need for a strong multilateral system; of the values espoused in the Charter of the United Nations; and of the pledge to leave no one behind. Trust in the multilateral system relies on its effectiveness. Too many commitments remain unmet, and many aspects of the system remain structurally inadequate in a world that continues to be widely asymmetric, in which convergence in economic, human and social development has not proved to be the norm, and that currently faces fundamental structural shifts. These include a breaching of multiple planetary boundaries; geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts; increasing inequalities, including of access to the global commons and natural capital; technological change, particularly artificial intelligence; a weakening role of the State; and a decline in commitments to norms and values underpinning the international order.

2. Responding to those realities and ensuring a voice and representation for all countries is a matter of effectiveness of the system as much as of fairness. The multilateral system must support the capacity, policy space and fiscal space of States to address the long-standing goals of poverty eradication, equality, and structural transformation of their economies, as well as to face new challenges such as those related to the ecological crisis and major technological changes. The global trading system needs to be informed by pro-development principles. The global and regional institutional structures and norms for financing for development need to deliver results for developing countries in securing debt sustainability and reducing the debt burden which weighs heavily on the public budgets; reducing the excessively high cost of borrowing; enabling tax cooperation, which is a crucial element in the capacity of countries to mobilize domestic resources; and maximizing the potential of multilateral development banks to help countries to advance in structural transformation. There is significant scope for improvement in procedures and practices to ensure that the development efforts of international organizations and international financial institutions effectively and efficiently reach those – both countries and people – furthest behind. These improvements should be undertaken in the framework of efforts to strengthen, not weaken, multilateral structures and collaboration.

Metrics matter: evidence-based, pragmatic recommendations to advance towards poverty eradication

3. Ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development and as Member States reflect and deliberate on advancing sustainable development by 2030 and beyond, the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions remains imperative. How poverty is defined and measured, how poverty eradication goals are framed, and how indicators are chosen have significant practical importance for the effectiveness of policy. In chapter II, the Committee makes four recommendations on the measurement of poverty and poverty reduction and their link to policy action. The Committee will further elaborate on these recommendations as part of its upcoming contributions to the Summit.

Framework for graduation from the least developed country category

4. The Committee remains highly concerned about the difficult external environment that least developed countries face in their pursuit towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their own national development goals, including progressing towards graduation from the list of least developed countries. The mounting impacts of climate change, armed conflicts, long-lasting negative effects from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, macroeconomic challenges, an increase in protectionism and looming massive reductions in official development assistance (ODA) cloud the prospects of least developed countries. This holds true in particular for those that remain far from meeting the established criteria for graduation and often face severe impediments for which there is currently no adequate international support. A thorough rethinking of international support to least developed countries is needed.

5. An effective framework for graduation requires not only specific support and incentives that reflect a changing global environment and persistent and emerging challenges but also procedures that can address possible disruptions to multi-year graduation processes. The Committee developed concrete proposals to refine the current procedures for ongoing and upcoming graduations, as outlined in chapter III of the present report. In this regard, the Committee reiterates the importance of updating the existing General Assembly resolutions on smooth transition as one of the means to make the graduation framework fit for purpose. It reiterates its availability to substantively contribute to the process culminating in a new resolution.

Monitoring of countries that are graduating or have graduated from the list of least developed countries

6. The Committee monitored the development progress of eight countries that have recently graduated or are graduating from the list of least developed countries. It noted an overall advancement towards sustainable graduation amid common and unique challenges stemming from various global crises, geopolitical tensions, and climate change. These challenges, such as mounting debt, inflationary pressures and currency devaluation, have become significant hurdles for many of the monitored countries in maintaining macroeconomic stability.

7. In response, many countries require substantial support from their trading and development partners, including entities within the United Nations system, to facilitate their progress towards smooth and sustainable graduation.

8. The Committee will continue to improve the structure and operation of its enhanced monitoring mechanism, based on lessons learned from the mechanism's implementation.

Chapter II

New development contexts and pathways

A. Fundamental shifts and megatrends redefining the global economy require a strengthened multilateralism for development

9. A number of structural shifts are converging to create a world that is very different from the one on which the current multilateral development system and contemporary development policy, in all its diversity, were founded. These shifts will shape the context in which policymakers will navigate development pathways in the coming years and decades. The world is at the edge of several planetary tipping points, with profound implications for human security and livelihoods as well as for the prospects of development. The poorest countries are the least equipped to protect themselves against the risks related to this ecological crisis as human lives, physical infrastructure and public budgets are left vulnerable and development gains are subject to reversals. Widening inequalities in incomes, wealth and social opportunities are, at present, also exacerbated by the unequal impacts of the ecological crisis and unequal access to the global commons and natural capital. Major technological changes with economy-wide impact, particularly the expansion of artificial intelligence and a significant (if still insufficient) transition towards clean energy, are changing the drivers of economic growth and productivity, and while they present opportunities, they also have the potential to generate severe disruptions, including in the labour market. Taking advantage of the opportunities will depend on the capacity of economies to shape and unleash these technologies, which many countries do not yet have.

10. These shifts, which are taking place against a backdrop of slow progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, incomplete and fragile convergence in economic and social dimensions (see sect. D below), rising income inequalities, insufficient generation of decent jobs, and insufficient structural transformation in developing economies, demand strategic action by States in the context of an enabling and supportive multilateral framework. However, increasing political polarization worldwide, geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions and fragmentation, and a decline in commitments to the values of democracy, human rights, equality and solidarity that have underpinned the international world order since the formation of the United Nations, are having severe impacts on the functioning of the multilateral system and on the ability to garner genuine international consensus and collaboration on matters of global relevance and mutual interest. A gulf has developed between ambitions and reality and between commitments and implementation, contributing to a loss of trust. At the national level, the capacity of States, particularly developing countries, to invest and regulate in the public interest, has been weakened by severe limits to fiscal and policy space, and the channelling of resources to productive investment has been limited by a financial system geared above all towards short-term financial return.

11. The new contexts and the threats facing the current system call for an unequivocal reaffirmation of the importance of the multilateral system for development and of its urgent strengthening through greater effectiveness and alignment with contemporary realities and challenges. The measure against which the strength and effectiveness of the multilateral system will be assessed is the extent to which it delivers results for people and communities, especially those furthest behind.

12. A stronger multilateralism will be one that is rooted in a more inclusive and representative framework, takes a pragmatic approach to delivering results, advances genuine consensus on common goals, reflects asymmetries in needs and capabilities, and ensures policy space for countries to advance on country-specific strategies for

structural transformation. Within the broader multilateral framework, regional, plurilateral, South-South and issues-based coalitions can provide opportunities to advance on processes, institutions and cooperation for sustainable and equitable global development.

13. Navigating new and rapidly changing contexts will require government capacity for strategic policymaking and engagement with the private sector and other actors with a view to integration into global value chains and to continued competitiveness in a rapidly shifting economic and technological environment. This includes exploring alternatives to traditional technological development policies, exploring co-development opportunities, investing in general-purpose technologies, and seeking out strategic advantages on which to build competitive assets. For example, for Africa, a young population in the context of an ageing world can also generate great potential in terms of markets and future technological development, particularly if intellectual property regimes enable the development of African innovation systems and a better distribution of the value associated with innovation. South-South experience-sharing can be an important instrument in building these capacities. The objective of securing decent employment remains critical but needs to be complemented with approaches that empower individuals and businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to take advantage of opportunities in this new and fast-changing setting, including clean technologies, the circular economy, the nature economy and bioeconomy, and the oceans economy.

B. Financing for development

14. The actions of the international community on financing for development and the international financial architecture, including the outcomes of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, need to be taken with full consideration of their impacts for people, families and small businesses, including those in the periphery of the formal financial system.

15. The capacity of many developing countries to advance towards the Sustainable Development Goals has been limited by large debt burdens, an unreasonably high cost of borrowing, and limited capacity to mobilize domestic resources. As stated above, the institutional structures and norms for financing for development need to be able to deliver results in terms of securing debt sustainability and reducing the debt burden which weighs heavily on the public budgets; reducing the excessively high cost of borrowing, including by developing alternatives to the current credit rating system; enabling tax cooperation; and maximizing the potential of multilateral development banks to help countries to advance in structural transformation. The Committee has made recommendations for institutional reforms that would facilitate the alignment of the global financing architecture with the social goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; a greater role for multilateral development banks in the provision and financing of international public goods, both global and regional; the creation of an International Monetary Fund-managed instrument for international liquidity provision for emerging markets and developing economies; a mechanism for restructuring sovereign debts to overcome problems of overindebtedness and to guarantee sustainable growth; the creation of a global asset registry to control tax evasion and avoidance; and the transformation of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters into an intergovernmental organ. Action areas to realize the potential of trade and innovation for development are also highlighted.

16. In the context of unprecedented reductions in foreign aid and great uncertainty, development cooperation needs to be reoriented to strengthen its focus on building

capacity within developing countries to advance towards the Sustainable Development Goals, foster structural transformation and build resilience. This includes the capacity to mobilize domestic resources; undertake domestic reforms that facilitate and attract investment that fosters structural transformation; design and implement integrated and context-appropriate sustainable industrial policies, poverty eradication and social protection strategies, and disaster risk reduction strategies; and generate capabilities in innovation and general-purpose technologies. Better use can be made of the potential of South-South peer learning and experience-sharing, and the potential of artificial intelligence in the dissemination of policy experiences and lessons and in strategic decision-making for development should be explored. There should also be careful scrutiny of procedures and practices to eliminate inefficiencies, such as project transaction costs that dwarf the benefits of the assistance, exploring context- and scale-appropriate alternative accountability mechanisms.

C. Trade as engine for sustainable development

17. The potential of trade as an engine for development is widely recognized, including in the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future. Indeed, over the past decades trade has been an important factor in lifting millions out of poverty. However, the development gains of trade are neither guaranteed nor automatic, and many countries and groups of people have been left out or even pushed behind. Many countries have not been able to reach their potential in terms of diversification, structural transformation and inclusive growth through trade. In the promising sector of critical minerals, many developing countries, including least developed countries, that are endowed with critical minerals remain linked into global value chains predominantly as providers of raw materials. This means that the potential for trade to advance transformational activities and jobs is being transferred to other places.

18. The current landscape presents an increasingly complex and uncertain picture, with geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts generating significant headwinds, adding to existing challenges in logistics, maritime security and issues of global taxation, including climate-related taxation. It requires a renewed commitment to a trade ecosystem anchored in a rules-based, fair, transparent and supportive multilateral trading system that reflects asymmetries in global development and contemporary challenges and opportunities, and ensures space for context-appropriate national development pathways.

19. Some of the limitations of the current multilateral trading system are systemic, by design of the rules and of the architecture of governance, and others by incomplete implementation and enforcement. One critical design element has been insufficient differentiation to reflect and accommodate the widely disparate levels of development and trade capabilities. A level playing field among a group of countries that includes the poorest of the least developed countries and the world's largest trade players cannot be achieved with rules with predominantly marginal and ineffective differentiation. A multilateral system that delivers on the promise of trade as an engine for development needs to agree on disciplines to address the proliferation of subsidies and protectionist measures while allowing developing countries to use policy tools to achieve their development aspirations according to their capacities and needs, subject to specific global rules. Dispute settlement mechanisms need to be effective and accessible, taking into account the severe resource limitations, including diplomatic and public administration resources, of least developed countries and many developing countries, particularly smaller ones.

20. The global system functions alongside an ecosystem of regional, plurilateral and bilateral agreements that have developed over time. These agreements have the

potential to encourage new trade patterns, particularly at a moment of rising South-South trade, and bring about new development gains and opportunities. Regional agreements have enabled and are enabling advances in regulatory cooperation and harmonization, investment policy, competition policy and other areas. The deeper the integration, the greater the degree of diversification, and the stronger the institutional framework for implementation, the more likely these agreements are to advance development in their signatory countries. Reform of the global trading system also needs to address agricultural trade rules related to market access challenges of developing countries, the impacts of climate change and global food insecurity. Intellectual property rules need to ensure access to technology for global public goods and to support innovation and the commercialization and protection of intellectual property generated in the developing world.

21. Even with pro-development multilateral institutions and rules, trade will not fulfil its potential as an engine for sustainable development without integrated domestic policies in tune with the fast-changing global environment. Successful industrial policies are often derived from a consultative process with multiple stakeholders and have linked support to measurable targets, included sunset clauses and continuous evaluations and generally emphasized horizontal over vertical support. Their integration with strategies for innovation and intellectual property creation is particularly important in the rapidly changing technological context marked by the rise of digitalization, artificial intelligence, the energy transition and advances towards a circular economy. Effective trade policy requires investment in robust infrastructure and logistics systems; an efficient bureaucracy; education policy (including technical and high school education) that is in line with industrial policy; a simple and transparent tariff and non-tariff regime; and a trade finance strategy that includes accessible finance for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and businesses owned by women, youth and marginalized communities. Where applicable, public development banks should expand trade finance facilities, and there should be a re-evaluation of risk ratings for trade finance in international banking regulatory systems, such as the Basel III framework.

22. Of special relevance to least developed countries is the issue of preferential trading arrangements. These arrangements were conceived to support developing countries in reducing reliance on commodity exports, creating well-paying manufacturing jobs and reducing poverty. Currently there are multiple preferential market access schemes, some of which have been integral to the advancement of some countries towards graduation from the least developed country category. However, many other countries have not been able to take advantage of these schemes. National capacity to produce tradable goods and services is often limited, as is the capacity to innovate and protect innovation, attract investment, and invest in infrastructure and logistics, all of which also depend on access to finance and integrated national policies. Moreover, over time, preferential margins have been eroded due to multiple trade agreements and the decline in most-favoured-nation tariffs, and non-tariff barriers have increased. Rules of origin often do not reflect contemporary production realities. Some bilateral preferential market access schemes have also proved unpredictable in their implementation, reducing their impact, given the uncertainties that they create for investors and policymakers. To be relevant, preferential market access schemes need to be revised, taking into account the changes that have occurred over the past decades, and need to be accompanied by significantly greater support to boost productive capacities in developing countries and, particularly, least developed countries.

D. Convergence in human and social development

23. In the 2030 Agenda, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, was named as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The Pact for the Future reiterated this objective as an imperative for all humankind. However, 10 years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the world is off track. The priority and urgency of eradicating poverty will be one of the three core themes at the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development and is central to other global processes such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty. Ensuring that no one is left behind or pushed behind, a concept that has found widespread resonance since 2015, is critical moving forward. The current global context calls for breaking-the-mould approaches and pragmatic solutions, for which research and evidence are critical, as recognized in the choice of theme of the Economic and Social Council for 2025.

24. Convergence in development outcomes between and within countries has been at the centre of analytical work on development. With new challenges and changing development contexts, a sophisticated understanding of convergence is needed, one that includes multidimensional poverty measures, lessons from the efforts that have been made to “leave no one behind”, and a comprehensive concept of human development. There is a need to address both new and persistent inequalities to ensure inclusive and multidimensional convergence. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita can no longer be the benchmark for success in development.

25. Convergence between least developed countries and other developing countries has been a focus of the work of the Committee since the inception of the least developed country category. Analysis of the development of countries based on the criteria that officially define the category shows that least developed countries have made progress and even achieved some degree of convergence on social indicators, such as reducing child and maternal mortality and achieving gender parity in school completion. However, convergence overall has been limited, particularly in economic and environmental indicators. Beyond the official indicators, least developed countries showed faster improvements in some areas, such as electricity access and immunization rates, but lagged in others, such as Internet access, disaster resilience and refugee displacement. Over time, there have been notable shifts in global convergence trends. Periods of regression, such as in the 1970s and 1980s, were followed by periods of greater convergence, such as from 2005 to 2015, but in the more recent period progress has stagnated on several dimensions. Likewise, the human development index scores for least developed countries suffered a reversal after the pandemic. It is not yet clear whether the recent stagnation and reversals will be short-lived or are indicative of a longer-term challenge. However, recent trends demonstrate that any convergence is vulnerable to shocks of multiple natures, which are expected to become more frequent and more severe, requiring the incorporation of resilience-building and disaster risk reduction in convergence strategies.

26. One of the factors behind the insufficient convergence is the meagre progress on structural transformation. Many least developed countries have become more commodity dependent over time, with deep implications for inclusive growth, employment, and poverty eradication. A number of other factors have affected recent advances, including recurrent crises, a persistent digital divide, rising living costs, development finance constraints including the burden of external debt, and political instability. Conflict, insecurity and displacement have also significantly stunted convergence. The new context presents new challenges: for example, artificial

intelligence can present significant challenges for countries and people who are not equipped to take advantage of its potential and instead are vulnerable to the labour and other disruptions that it creates. In a context of ecological crisis, while convergence and structural transformation remain goals, new pathways towards those goals need to be explored, for example through new technologies and new value chains, which in turn requires countries to invest in productive capacities, including innovation and technological capacities.

27. Social convergence within the poorest countries is closely linked to enabling upward intergenerational mobility. Key policies in this regard include policies rebalancing economic and financial inequalities between locations and between wealth groups, as well as those strengthening child health and education. This underscores the importance of harnessing the positive relationship between reducing poverty and accelerating social convergence. Reducing monetary poverty rebalances economic and financial inequalities, whereas reducing multidimensional poverty improves status in health, education and living standards. Integrated approaches that consider cross-sectoral co-benefits have often proved to be more effective than approaches focusing on single dimensions of deprivations individually.

28. Despite the insufficient progress and convergence by least developed countries overall, several developing countries, including some least developed countries, have made significant strides in narrowing development gaps and shown remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. It is important to recognize those facts, both to value the potential lessons of these experiences and to eliminate outdated narratives that can be damaging or limiting for public action. Hans Rosling's *Factfulness*, for example, highlights common biases and inattention to facts surrounding global poverty eradication and development, and their implications for action. A focus on relative poverty reduction goals, such as in target 1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions), severely downplays the large improvements in multidimensional poverty in the countries that face the highest poverty rates, including many countries in Africa, which can perpetuate pessimistic narratives about the continent's capacity and achievements. Also contrary to the most common narrative, African countries weathered the COVID-19 crisis well, with some of the best records in sanitary and economic aspects. Nevertheless, many countries in Africa were hard hit by the subsequent effects of the pandemic on the global economy and the cost of capital.

29. A renewed focus on poverty is essential for the global development agenda. The focus should be on poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and attention should not be restricted to monetary poverty. As pragmatic and evidence-based contributions to the work of the Council and of Member States in the relevant forums, the Committee recommends the following:

(a) Measurement of poverty: the ambitions set out in the 2030 Agenda call for integrated, strategic policy responses that can address multiple deprivations. This in turn requires that the interlinkages between different dimensions of well-being or of deprivation be visible. Multidimensional metrics on non-monetary poverty provide more useful information than dashboards in this respect, enabling integrated action. The Committee recommends using a combination of global and national multidimensional poverty indices. For example, the global multidimensional poverty index of the United Nations Development Programme and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and national multidimensional poverty indices (currently reported as Sustainable Development Goal indicator 1.2.2) can be reported alongside the international poverty line and national monetary poverty measures.

Such poverty indices should be integrated into convergence analysis to track progress for groups left behind across multiple dimensions;

(b) Relative and absolute poverty reduction: using only relative poverty reduction measures can underplay the very significant advances made by many of the poorest countries, which deserve recognition and sustained support and provide lessons for other countries and jurisdictions. While the fastest relative reductions in multidimensional poverty are not in least developed countries, some of the fastest absolute reductions are. Absolute changes in poverty rates and information on the number of people exiting poverty should be highlighted alongside relative poverty reduction, expanding the visibility of successes in the poorest countries;

(c) Focusing on the poorest groups and leaving no one behind requires disaggregated data: the Committee stresses the importance of assessing convergence both between and within countries, recognizing intracountry disparities and people's experience of interlinked deprivations, and exploring trends among the poorest of the poor. This requires poverty metrics using data disaggregated by subnational regions or by location, age, gender, ethnicity, disability status and other context-appropriate variables. Disaggregated data can guide impactful policies, with a focus on the interlinked deprivations experienced by these groups;

(d) Encouraging public action by means of communication: given the changing development context, it is crucial to communicate poverty data clearly to inform public action. This includes not only government actions but also initiatives by other stakeholders, including the general public. Clear communication of poverty metrics will help to drive coordinated efforts to address these challenges. Showcasing positive experiences based on evidence illustrates what is possible and can be a powerful incentive for action, not just by States but by all actors, particularly in challenging times.

30. The Committee will continue its work on these matters, as well as on domestic inequalities and decent employment, in its contributions to the Second World Social Summit.

Chapter III

Reviewing the framework for graduation from the least developed country category

31. The Committee initiated its review of the framework for graduation from the least developed country category. In view of the significant changes in the global economic and trading landscape since the General Assembly created the category over 50 years ago, it started to revisit the conceptual underpinnings of the category, the challenges with graduation, and experiences and challenges with smooth transition out of the category. It also examined the current procedures governing least developed country graduation and developed proposals for their refinement.

A. Conceptual underpinnings of the least developed country category, graduation and smooth transition

32. The Committee has been entrusted with the responsibility of identifying the least developed countries and monitoring their progress since the inception of the category in 1971. Despite international consensus on the need to support least developed countries in overcoming their structural challenges by better integrating themselves into the global economy, over the first two and a half decades of the category's existence most of the least developed countries fell further behind their peers in key dimensions of sustainable development. While least developed countries have experienced some convergence since then towards other developing countries in their human and social development, particularly in the 2000s, and made notable gains in raising national incomes, most of them made only very limited progress towards structurally transforming their economies. Most recently, the intensification and increase in frequency of crises has reversed some hard-fought development gains, and prospects remain highly uncertain.

33. Momentum towards graduation has increased over the past two decades. Eight countries have graduated from the least developed country category, and 14 others have started the formal graduation process. At the same time, challenges for graduating and recently graduated countries are mounting in the face of an increase in the frequency and severity of global crises as well as of idiosyncratic factors disrupting their graduation processes. Moreover, based on current trajectories, graduation prospects appear extremely low for many of the least developed countries that are far below the thresholds for graduation. Often, these countries are in conflict or post-conflict situations, host large numbers of refugees, rely significantly on dwindling ODA for the provision of social services, and are particularly affected by climate change and environmental shocks. Perceptions of least developed country status, graduation and smooth transition are evolving. While concern over the loss of access to support measures specific to least developed countries persists, a greater number of countries are giving greater attention in their smooth transition strategies to harnessing opportunities arising from graduation and to ensuring post-graduation development momentum.

34. While international support measures have been expanding over time, they have remained insufficient. The most important measures have been in the area of trade, particularly duty-free, quota-free market access to developed and major developing country markets. However, these measures have been focused on market access, without commensurate additional support for capacity-building to remedy the supply side constraints faced by least developed countries. Consequently, many least developed countries have been unable to use some of these measures.

35. Consequently, there is a need to improve the support available to all least developed countries, particularly those that have not yet reached the graduation thresholds, but also countries in the process of graduating. This, in turn, requires a broader rethinking of the support available to least developed countries, both support for integrating them better into the global economy for overcoming structural economic challenges and support for addressing persistent and recurring challenges and building resilience. Such rethinking should be approached as a long-term and inclusive undertaking based on a thorough assessment of available support that goes beyond currently available assessments. The Committee has rich experience acquired through its triennial reviews of the list of least developed countries and its monitoring of graduating and graduated countries, and it stands ready to engage in such assessment and rethinking.

36. Improved support to all least developed countries would be an essential element of a strengthened graduation framework, if it assists least developed countries in advancing towards sustainable development and becoming eligible for graduation. Strengthening the graduation framework also requires improving graduation-specific support for a smooth transition out of the category, as well as providing concrete incentives.

B. Updating the graduation procedures

37. Based on its thorough review of the current graduation procedures, the Committee decided to refine the methods with which it implements its mandates in order to reduce uncertainties and to increase the transparency of the graduation framework. For the preparation and conduct of the upcoming triennial reviews, the Committee will apply the following:

(a) One year after a country meets the graduation criteria for the first time, the Committee appoints one of its members as rapporteur for the country. Working closely with the Committee secretariat, the country rapporteur will assist with the identification of additional information requirements and, in case the country is subsequently recommended for graduation, the monitoring of the country under the enhanced monitoring mechanism. In preparation for the subsequent triennial review, the country rapporteur will have virtual or in-person (subject to the availability of resources) meetings with the Government and the United Nations resident coordinator. Increasing awareness and knowledge of the least developed country graduation process within the country depends predominantly on efforts made by the Government and the United Nations system;

(b) At the same time, the Committee requests the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to identify key vulnerabilities and impacts of graduation, respectively, that could affect the sustainability of post-graduation development progress. These overviews should be drawn from the more comprehensive studies prepared by the respective entities based on the existing mandates, which should also be shared with countries and the Committee;

(c) The Committee requests its secretariat to incorporate these inputs, together with information on the least developed country criteria and the set of supplementary graduation indicators, into a “graduation assessment” report for consideration by the Committee during the official preparatory meeting of the triennial review to take place before the actual triennial review;

(d) For the preparatory meeting, the Committee invites the country to submit a written statement on its views on graduation and give a presentation at the meeting,

including on risks to the sustainability of the progress achieved. The Government may update its statement after the official preparatory meeting but before the actual triennial review;

(e) If the country meets the graduation criteria for a second consecutive time at the triennial review, the Committee will recommend the country for graduation unless it finds that the least developed country criteria scores and the additional information, including the views expressed by the Government, reveal significant concerns over the sustainability of the progress achieved by meeting the graduation criteria (i.e. if the Committee identifies a significant risk that the country will cease to be eligible for graduation in the near to medium term);

(f) If the Committee clearly identifies such concerns, it defers the consideration to the next triennial review. Normally, it would contemplate deferment only if requested by the Government in the written submission. If the Committee defers a country's consideration, it will request the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD to update their inputs to the graduation assessment for the next triennial review, and request its secretariat to prepare an updated graduation assessment;

(g) The Committee has consistently found that countries require a five-year preparatory period to prepare themselves effectively for graduation. While the standard length of the preparatory period remains three years, the Committee will normally include in a recommendation for graduation a statement that the countries require an extended period of five years (see para. 39 (e) below);

(h) The Committee monitors the development progress of graduating and recently graduated countries within its enhanced monitoring mechanism, which includes consultations with the country concerned. Consultations will also be held with countries whose graduation has been deferred;

(i) The Committee would recommend an extension within the enhanced monitoring mechanism if requested by the country in writing and if the Committee finds that external shocks significantly disrupt the preparations for graduation or create a significant risk for the country no longer meeting the criteria in the foreseeable future.

38. The Committee will take these refinements into account when reviewing the least developed country graduation criteria and indicators and the supplementary graduation indicators for the 2027 triennial review, together with its long-standing principles for reviewing the criteria, to reflect advances in development thinking and data availability.

39. While these measures should already contribute to improving the graduation procedures, the Committee reiterates its previous findings that the existing General Assembly resolutions on smooth transition (resolutions [59/209](#) and [67/221](#)) require updating that should, among other things, strengthen the graduation procedures. The Committee suggests that such strengthening include considering the following proposals:

(a) Consolidate all key provisions regarding the graduation procedures in the resolution;

(b) Request relevant United Nations entities to support the country in starting to prepare for graduation after the country meets the graduation criteria for the first time;

(c) Request countries considered for graduation to submit a written statement (see para. 37 (d) above) as an input to the triennial review;

(d) Provide guidance on deferments by the Council of the Committee's recommendations and the distinctive functions of the Council and the General Assembly in the graduation process. The guidance should include a way forward for those countries for which a recommendation is currently before the Council, in one case for over a decade;

(e) Set the standard length of the preparatory period at five years, to allow for countries to prepare a smooth transition strategy under a consultative whole-of-society approach and to start its implementation before the actual graduation date;

(f) Clarify that extensions of preparatory periods in case of external shocks must be addressed within the enhanced monitoring mechanism, requiring: (i) a written request by the country; (ii) a recommendation by the Committee; (iii) an endorsement by the Council; and (iv) a decision by the General Assembly;

(g) Clarify that situations where a graduating country no longer meets the graduation criteria must be addressed within the enhanced monitoring mechanism. The country would cease to be considered a graduating country if: (i) requested by the country to the Committee; (ii) the Committee finds that failing to meet the graduation criteria is not merely a short-term temporary situation; (iii) the finding is endorsed by the Council; and (iv) a final decision is made by the General Assembly. Its graduation process would restart once it is recommended again following the established procedures;

(h) Specify the role of the resident coordinator and various international United Nations entities in the provision of graduation-specific support during the preparatory and transition periods;

(i) Establish a fixed length of nine years for the post-graduation transition period, during which the monitoring by the Committee continues (see also chap. IV);

(j) Introduce a readmittance procedure for recently graduated countries that no longer meet the graduation criteria during the nine-year transition period. The procedure could follow the same format as in cases of graduating countries no longer meeting the criteria (see subpara. (g) above).

40. As reported previously, the update of the resolution on smooth transition would also allow the provision of additional guidance on smooth transition strategies and, most importantly, an opportunity to agree on strengthened graduation support measures and on international incentives for graduation. The Committee confirms its readiness to engage in a process leading to a new resolution.

Chapter IV

Enhanced monitoring of countries that are graduating or have graduated from the list of least developed countries

A. Introduction

41. As mandated in Council resolution 2024/7 and General Assembly resolution 67/221, the Committee monitored the development progress of two recently graduated countries, namely Bhutan and Sao Tome and Principe, and six graduating countries, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Senegal and Solomon Islands. The detailed monitoring reports, with recommendations on policy priorities and support needs, as well as the full reports submitted by the countries, are available on the Committee's website. The table below shows the least developed country criteria scores vis-à-vis the graduation thresholds established in the 2024 triennial review of least developed countries.

Least developed country criteria for the countries monitored, 2025

	<i>Least developed country criteria</i>		
	<i>Gross national income per capita (United States dollars)</i>	<i>Human assets index</i>	<i>Economic and environmental vulnerability index</i>
Graduation threshold (2024)	≥1 306	≥66.0	≤32.0
Graduated country			
Bhutan	3 563	79.4	32.0
Sao Tome and Principe	2 466	91.4	40.2
Graduating countries			
Bangladesh	2 899	77.8	22.1
Cambodia	1 983	77.5	22.2
Lao People's Democratic Republic	2 375	75.3	30.6
Nepal	1 404	77.6	29.0
Senegal	1 620	66.9	41.9
Solomon Islands	2 152	78.1	50.0
Averages			
Least developed countries	1 388	59.4	39.8
Other developing countries	10 071	87.9	32.2

Source: Committee for Development Policy secretariat.

Note: Details on the least developed country criteria are available on the Committee's website.

B. Graduated countries

Bhutan

42. Bhutan graduated in December 2023 and swiftly recovered from multiple global crises, resuming its path of progress. In July 2024, it began implementing its thirteenth five-year plan, which has been designated as a smooth transition strategy for sustainable graduation. Close monitoring of current account deficits is important, and longer-term challenges include economic diversification, reducing dependence on hydropower exports and strengthening resilience to environmental changes. The

Committee continues to caution that the goal of achieving high-income status by 2034 may be overly ambitious. It recommends prioritizing advancements in productive capacity, particularly through digitalization of the service sector. It also recognizes and supports the call of Bhutan for continued international assistance, particularly access to financial resources, to address the challenges of being a small landlocked country and vulnerable to climate change.

Sao Tome and Principe

43. Sao Tome and Principe graduated from the least developed country category in December 2024. Instead of preparing a separate smooth transition strategy, the Government chose to integrate key smooth transition measures into its national development plan, making the effective implementation of the plan crucial for a smooth transition. The country faces major macroeconomic challenges, including slow GDP growth, high inflation, substantial debt and ongoing external vulnerabilities. The Committee recommends prioritizing smooth transition actions to shift from an aid-dependent economy to one driven by a stronger private sector.

C. Graduating countries

Bangladesh

44. Bangladesh remains well on track towards sustainable graduation. It has managed to mitigate some of the adverse effects posed by multiple global crises. The interim Government formed following a student-led uprising in 2024 has launched critical policy reforms aimed at revitalizing the economy and overcoming current macroeconomic challenges. The country is expected to soon start implementing its comprehensive smooth transition strategy, which was validated in 2024 and is aimed at guiding the transition of Bangladesh towards a structurally transformed and competitive economy. Given the importance of least developed country-specific support measures to the development progress achieved, there is an urgent need for the international community, including the trading and development partners of Bangladesh and the United Nations, to provide it with the necessary support.

Cambodia

45. Cambodia has achieved sustained and rapid economic growth and successfully become a graduating country, meeting all three least developed country graduation criteria with significant margins. Cambodia has been granted a five-year preparatory period, and the Committee welcomes the Government's strong commitment to graduation, recognizing it as a milestone in the country's socioeconomic progress. Key challenges ahead include sustaining inclusive growth, diversifying export markets and addressing the impact of slowing growth among major trading partners. The Committee advises Cambodia to continue to strengthen institutional arrangements and integrate its smooth transition strategy into the implementation of its national development plan.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

46. The Lao People's Democratic Republic continues to meet all least developed country criteria and to make progress towards sustainable graduation. The Government's continued effort to implement the smooth transition strategy, which was adopted in 2023 following a thorough and effective preparation, underscores its commitment to progress. Despite successfully navigating many challenges, the country faces notable difficulties with high inflation, decreasing currency value and mounting debt levels which are mutually reinforcing. The Committee advises

continued implementation of appropriate fiscal and monetary policies to address these issues and to enhance stability of the economy, in line with the implementation of the smooth transition strategy and other relevant strategies, and emphasizes the importance of international support for the management, restructuring and reduction of debt, as well as economic diversification.

Nepal

47. Nepal continues to advance steadily towards sustainable graduation. For the first time, it meets all three graduation criteria, including the income criterion. While the economy experienced a significant slowdown due to multiple global crises and has faced macroeconomic challenges, recovery has been relatively swift, particularly with the revival of the tourism and manufacturing sectors. Sustained efforts in implementing effective policies focused on economic diversification, trade policy in synergy with investment promotion, and disaster risk reduction will be critical to achieving sustainable graduation. The Government is implementing the smooth transition strategy, in line with the national development plan.

Senegal

48. Senegal has made significant advances and is scheduled to graduate in 2029. It currently faces significant challenges, including a high fiscal deficit and rising public and external debt, and high vulnerability to climate change. The current account deficit, which had worsened significantly in recent years, is expected to improve with the expansion of hydrocarbon production and exports. The Government has developed a road map for a smooth transition and is advancing on the measures identified. Going forward, critical areas of action are improving the educational system and its outcomes, addressing inequalities and implementing strategies for economic diversification, industrialization, and scientific and technological advancement, issues prioritized in the development vision adopted in 2024.

Solomon Islands

49. Solomon Islands remains on track to graduate in December 2027 but continues to expand its economy only moderately, with growth rates considerably below national and international targets. The country faces continued challenges to diversifying its economy and to building resilience against climate shocks. The country has developed a smooth transition strategy following broad consultations, which is currently awaiting endorsement by the Government. The Committee recommends that United Nations entities continue to support the country in implementing the strategy.

D. Deferred countries

50. The Committee welcomed the consultations it held with Kiribati and Tuvalu and looks forward to continuing its consultations with both countries, as well as with Djibouti. These three countries, having been recommended by the Committee for graduation in 2018, 2012 and 2024, respectively, continue to meet the gross national income per capita and human assets index criteria, all three with wide margins for income and both island States also with wide margins for the human assets index criterion. However, all three are among the most vulnerable countries in the world, according to their economic and environmental vulnerability index scores. The Committee reiterates that graduation must not be seen as a signal that these countries no longer need special treatment. The extreme and long-lasting vulnerability of these countries requires specific, targeted, sustained and easily accessible financial and

technical support that is outside the scope of least developed country-specific support measures.

E. Enhanced monitoring mechanism

51. The Committee reviewed the structure and functioning of the enhanced monitoring mechanism to further improve its effectiveness, drawing on lessons learned from its implementation. The mechanism has leveraged existing national and international monitoring processes, incorporating factors related to disruptive events that may impact the smooth transition out of the least developed country category, as well as considering the short- and long-term socioeconomic and environmental challenges.

52. The mechanism has received strong support from Member States, as reflected, inter alia, in multiple Council and General Assembly resolutions, including the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, as well as in the Ministerial Declaration of the Least Developed Countries.

53. The annual monitoring process within the mechanism has improved significantly, leading to a rise in country participation. The share of countries submitting national reports on smooth transition has increased, from 13 per cent during 2009–2021 to 61 per cent in the period from 2022 to 2025.

54. The crisis response process was introduced to provide continuous monitoring of shocks and emergencies. Solomon Islands became the first country to trigger the process, which ultimately led to a three-year extension of its preparatory period. However, several challenges have emerged in the operation of the process, including the insufficient availability of high-frequency data, the reluctance of countries to declare crises due to concerns about negative international perceptions, and a lack of clear guidelines on response actions.

55. Support linked to the mechanism has been strengthened but remains limited to the length of the preparatory period. The case of Solomon Islands showcases the support provided under the mechanism, by extending the preparatory period for least developed country graduation, and the case of Angola demonstrates that cases of countries failing to meet the graduation criteria during the preparatory period can be effectively addressed through the mechanism. At the same time, there has been little progress or demand to link the mechanism to other forms of support.

56. Based on these findings, the Committee suggests the way forward as follows:

(a) Monitoring graduating and graduated countries must consider critical global challenges: (i) stagnation in ODA, with increased focus on refugees and the impacts of worldwide geopolitical tensions; (ii) limited capitalization of multilateral development banks, affecting financing for the Sustainable Development Goals and climate adaptation; and (iii) stagnation in global trade amid increasing restrictions. Country-specific impacts of these issues will be discussed in consultations with the countries;

(b) Reliable and timely data are crucial for the enhanced monitoring mechanism, but significant gaps remain in countries being monitored. The Committee proposes recommendations on data improvement in the countries monitored and calls for the support of the international community as follows: (i) improve frequency, accuracy and transparency; (ii) enhance data resilience and sensitivity analysis; (iii) strengthen national statistical capacity; (iv) strengthen partnerships of national authorities with resident coordinator offices, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small

Island Developing States, regional commissions, and alternative data sources; (v) explore mechanisms to enhance data quality and accessibility (vi) promote the use of early warning indicators; and (vii) align data improvement needs through the Doha Programme of Action road map;

(c) The Committee will continue to improve annual monitoring reports, further align the use of its supplementary graduation indicators, incorporating information additional to standardized indicators, inputs from United Nations entities, and national reports on smooth transition. The Committee will further strengthen its comparative analysis of development progress and increase the focus on the development and implementation of smooth transition strategies. Monitoring reports will assess risks of countries no longer meeting graduation criteria and discuss support under the crisis response process when necessary. Countries will be encouraged to include their own smooth transition strategy monitoring and evaluation indicators for a comprehensive assessment. To enhance engagement, in-person consultations will be held where possible. The Committee's country rapporteur will continue to play a key role in monitoring the country and preparing policy recommendations. To align with evolving needs and the move from once-a-year to continuous monitoring, the post-graduation monitoring period may be standardized to nine years for consistency and clarity (see chap. III);

(d) The Committee stresses that the main objective of the crisis response process is to enable action related to graduation, particularly concerning the graduation timing, throughout the year if necessary. While formal triggering of the process will require a written request from the Government, the Committee may initiate the process in case of extreme climate events or conflict situations. The Committee may also flag concerns and initiate consultations based on internal reviews of high-frequency data. The Committee will assess, in a timely manner, whether the external shocks significantly impair the preparations for graduation or cause significant risk that the country will no longer meet the graduation criteria. It will request inputs from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNCTAD, as well as regional commissions and resident coordinator offices. If timing allows, crisis assessments may be integrated into annual monitoring reports;

(e) The Committee's direct role in graduation support is currently limited to preparatory period extensions, although it stands ready to provide its expertise in cases where a graduating or recently graduated country no longer meets the graduation criteria (*ibid.*). The Committee reaffirms its earlier recommendations to the Council, the General Assembly and United Nations agencies to enhance graduation-specific support, including: (i) mobilize United Nations crisis management expertise for external shocks affecting graduation; (ii) organize round-table discussions with development and trading partners, including South-South cooperation providers; (iii) integrate graduation discussions into Council forums and General Assembly meetings; (iv) strengthen capacity-building initiatives for the enhanced monitoring mechanism through United Nations-wide efforts; and (v) operationalize the Sustainable Graduation Support Facility (iGrad) under the Office of the High Representative.

Chapter V

Future work of the Committee

57. The Committee will continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the Council's deliberations and assisting it in the performance of its functions. In that framework, the Committee will continue to examine new development pathways in the context of fundamental shifts and evolving global contexts.

58. The Committee will continue its conceptual work related to the least developed country graduation framework, focusing on the overall support framework for least developed countries and giving particular attention to the reasons why several least developed countries are not progressing towards graduation. It will also review the least developed country criteria and the supplementary graduation indicators, as well as their application procedures, so that they can be applied at the 2027 triennial review.

59. In accordance with its mandates, the Committee will continue to monitor the development progress of recently graduated and currently graduating countries. It will hold consultations with these countries, as well as with those whose graduation has been deferred, in accordance with Council resolution [2024/7](#) and General Assembly resolution [76/258](#). The Committee remains committed to further improving the enhanced monitoring mechanism to accommodate evolving circumstances.

Chapter VI

Organization of the session

60. The Committee held its twenty-seventh session from 24 to 28 February 2025. All 24 members of the Committee attended the session, as did observers from several international organizations. The list of participants is included in annex I to the present report.

61. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided substantive services for the session. The Vice-Chair of the Committee during 2023–2024, Arunabha Ghosh, opened the session and welcomed the participants. The Committee elected its Bureau for 2025–2027: José Antonio Ocampo (Chair), Nyovani Janet Madise (Vice-Chair), Taffere Tesfachew (Vice-Chair) and Annalisa Prizzon (Rapporteur). During the subsequent inaugural session, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Robert Rae, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs addressed the Committee. Statements are available on the Committee’s website.¹

62. The agenda for the twenty-seventh session is contained in annex II to the present report.

¹ www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/cdp-plenary-2025/.

Annex I

List of participants

1. The following members of the Committee attended the session:

Sabina Alkire
Carlos Alvarado
Debapriya Bhattacharya
Ha-Joon Chang (virtual)
George Essegbey
Ahmed Galal
Arunabha Ghosh
Trudi Hartzenberg
Jibrin Ibrahim (virtual)
Anne-Laure Kiechel
Carlos Lopes
Nyovani Janet Madise
Patricia Miranda
Keith Nurse
José Antonio Ocampo Gaviria
Izumi Ohno
Åsa Persson (virtual)
Cristelle Pratt
Annalisa Prizzon
Taffere Tesfachew
Kori Udovicki
Rolph van der Hoeven
Natalya Volchkova
Xufeng Zhu

2. The following entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations were represented at the session:

Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Development Coordination Office
International Trade Centre
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

World Intellectual Property Organization

Annex II

Agenda

1. Orientation of new Committee members.
 2. Organization of work and election of the Committee Bureau.
 3. Inaugural session.
 4. New development contexts and pathways.
 5. New development contexts and pathways: financing for development.
 6. New development contexts and pathways: catalysing convergence in human and social development.
 7. New development contexts and pathways: trade as engine for sustainable development.
 8. Advancing sustainable development by 2030 and beyond.
 9. Committee input to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development.
 10. Overview of least developed country work, 2025–2027, and review of the least developed country graduation framework.
 11. Least developed country category in challenging times: experiences.
 12. Committee work on least developed countries in the year ahead.
 13. Economic and Social Council session.
 14. Subgroup meetings.
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