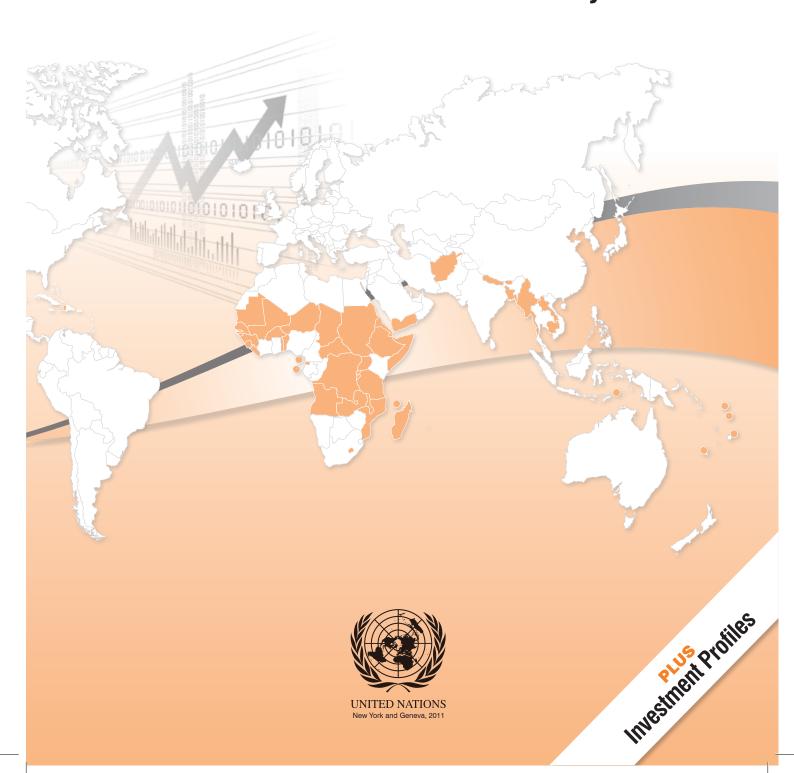
UNCTAD

Foreign Direct Investment in LDCs: Lessons Learned from the Decade 2001–2010 and the Way Forward



NOTE

As the focal point in the United Nations system for investment and enterprise development, and building on over 30 years of experience in these areas, UNCTAD, through its Division on Investment and Enterprise (DIAE), promotes understanding of key issues, particularly matters related to foreign direct investment (FDI). DIAE also assists developing countries in attracting and benefiting from FDI, and in building their productive capacities and international competitiveness. The emphasis is on an integrated policy approach to investment, technical capacity-building and enterprise development.

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Developed countries: the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (other than Chile, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Turkey), plus the new European Union member countries which are not OECD members (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Romania), plus Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.

Transition economies: South-East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Developing economies: in general all economies not specified above. For statistical purposes, the data for China do not include those for Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; and Taiwan Province of China.

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The following symbols have been used in the tables:

- Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported. Rows in tables have been omitted in those cases where no data are available for any of the elements in the row;
- A dash (–) indicates that the item is equal to zero or its value is negligible;
- A blank in a table indicates that the item is not applicable, unless otherwise indicated;
- A slash (/) between dates representing years, e.g., 1994/95, indicates a financial year;
- Use of an en dash (—) between dates representing years, e.g., 1994—1995, signifies the full period involved, including the beginning and end years;
- Reference to "dollars" (\$) means United States dollars, unless otherwise indicated;
- Annual rates of growth or change, unless otherwise stated, refer to annual compound rates;

Details and percentages in tables do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

The material contained in this study may be freely quoted with appropriate acknowledgement.

PREFACE

Ten years ago, the world community adopted the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), providing a framework to accelerate economic growth and achieve sustainable development in LDCs. Yet, despite the fact that some of them enjoyed the world's highest and most sustained growth rates and they have development potential in general, more than half of their population still lives in absolute poverty. Their economic hardships are being compounded by the recent economic and financial crisis, increasing food and energy insecurity and climate variability.

UNCTAD has made comprehensive proposals for a new international development architecture for LDCs. The paradigm shift involves a more pro-active approach to developing productive capacities, which will require a better balance between markets and the State, and places production and employment at the heart of efforts to reduce poverty. This productive capacity approach gives greater emphasis to the promotion of investment, both domestic and foreign, while using aid to end, rather than reinforce, aid dependence.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has played an important role in LDCs in the last decade, as it was a major contributor to the group's capital formation. FDI contributed towards promoting propoor growth and sustainable development, and reducing social and income disparities. However, the concentration of FDI in enclaves of export-oriented primary production with limited employment, technological and productivity linkages remains the main challenge in most LDCs.

The present report by UNCTAD, prepared on the eve of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, aims to give readers a broad overview of the FDI trends in LDCs over the past decade, focusing on the challenges LDCs face in attracting and benefitting from FDI for developing their productive capacities and on what can be done to improve the situation in the light of our longstanding work on FDI at UNCTAD. This report provides useful analysis and insights for all stakeholders, and will contribute to designing new measures and strategies for achieving sustainable development in the LDCs.

The report was prepared by Masataka Fujita, Quentin Dupriez and Richard Bolwijn under the direction of James Zhan. Inputs were received from Tserenpuntsag Batbold, Astrit Sulstarova, Elisabeth Tuerk and Lorenzo Tosini. Significant comments were received from Padma Mallampally. Bradley Boicourt and Lizanne Martinez provided statistical assistance. Elisabeth Anodeau-Mareschal and Katia Vieu provided administrative support. It was desktop-published by Teresita Ventura.

Supachai Panitchpakdi Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Geneva, April 2011

DEFINITION OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Forty-eight countries are currently designated by the United Nations as "least developed countries" (LDCs). These are: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia. The list of LDCs is reviewed every three years by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in the light of recommendations by the Committee for Development Policy.

The criteria underlying the current list of LDCs are:

- (a) A low-income criterion, as measured by the gross national income (GNI) per capita;
- (b) A weak human assets criterion, as measured by a composite index (the Human Assets Index) based on indicators of (i) nutrition (per capita calorie intake as a percentage of the relevant requirement); (ii) health (child mortality rate); (iii) school enrolment (secondary school enrolment ratio); and (iv) literacy (adult literacy rate); and
- (c) An economic vulnerability criterion, as measured by a composite index (the Economic Vulnerability Index) based on indicators of (i) instability in agricultural production; (ii) instability in exports of goods and services; (iii) the economic importance of non-traditional activities (share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP); (iv) economic concentration (UNCTAD's merchandise export concentration index); and (v) economic smallness (population in logarithm).¹

Different thresholds are used for addition to, and graduation from, the list of LDCs. A country qualifies for addition to the list if it meets inclusion thresholds on all three criteria, and if its population does not exceed 75 million. A country qualifies for graduation from LDC status if it meets graduation thresholds under at least two of the three criteria in at least two consecutive triennial reviews of the list.

At the time of the 2009 triennial review of the list of LDCs, the low-income threshold for addition to the list was a GNI per capita of \$905, and the threshold for graduation was \$1,086.

Source: UNCTAD, The Least Developed Countries Report 2010 (New York and Geneva: United Nations), United Nations publication, sales no. E.10.II.D.5.

^a As a supplement to data on the instability of agricultural production, the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters has been added to these five components, thereby creating a modified Economic Vulnerability Index.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABB Asian Development Bank

AGOA African Growth and Opportunity Act (United States of America)

BIT bilateral investment treaty

CREFAA Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Award

CSR corporate social responsibility

DTT double taxation treaty
EBA everything but arms
EU European Union

FDI foreign direct investment FTA free trade agreement

GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services (WTO Agreement)

GCC Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP gross domestic product
GFCF gross fixed capital formation
GMS Greater Mekong Subregion

ICSID International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

IIA international investment agreement IPA investment promotion agency IPR intellectual property rights LDC least developed country

UNLDC-IV Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

M&A merger and acquisition

MIGA Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency NEPAD New Partnership for Africa's Development

ODA official development assistance PPP public—private partnership

SADC Southern African Development Community

SME small and medium-sized enterprise

TNC transnational corporation

TRIMS Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (WTO Agreement)
TRIPS Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights

(WTO Agreement)

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UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change WAIPA World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies

WTO World Trade Organization

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