

**Joint Meeting of the  
General Assembly Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council  
20 October 2021, 10:00 am 1:00 pm, United Nations Headquarters**

*“Building productive capacities in Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States as well as Middle-Income Countries for more resilient recovery and sustainable development in the post-COVID-19 era”*

**Informal summary  
by the  
Chair of the Second Committee and the President of the Economic and Social Council**

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the world, it is having devastating impacts on the economies and societies of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as Middle-Income countries (MICs).

The 2021 Joint Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly (Second Committee) and the United Nations LEMC Panel on Development and Finance, co-chaired by the Chair of the Second Committee and the President of the Economic and Social Council, was held on 20 October 2021.

The Joint Meeting focused on the opportunities, challenges, key policies and investments needed to build productive capacities in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS as well as MICs as a critical step for recovering better from the COVID-19 pandemic and getting on track towards achieving the SDGs in the Decade of Action and Delivery. The Meeting explored innovative solutions and enabling policies to facilitate and augment the resilience of these countries through building productive capacities.

**Key messages**

The importance of resilient recovery from the pandemic was highlighted, focusing on the role that building productive capacities can play, along with long-term resilience to shocks.

The pandemic has contributed to a reversal of SDG progress in some areas, and delayed action on many of the major transformations required to meet the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Most least developed, landlocked developing, small island developing, and middle-income developing nations will take several years to return to 2019 levels of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.



energy sector. She also reaffirmed the commitment of the Second Committee to work together with ECOSOC.

*H.E. Mr. Collen V. Kelapile, President of the Economic and Social Council*, emphasized the devastating impact COVID-19 has had on developing countries. LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS as well as MICs have limited productive capacities, which constrain their ability to sustain economic growth, diversify their economies, boost resilience to shocks, achieve effective integration into the global economy and ensure the well-being of their people. Expanding productive capacities will not only have a positive impact but will also have constructive effects towards achieving the 2030 Agenda globally.

### **Building capacity    Setting the stage**

*Ms. Rebecca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, stressed the uneven recovery from COVID-19 across countries as one of the main challenges for the international community. There is a large gap in productive capacities between developing and developed countries. The international community must pursue a global recovery that closes this gap and provide support to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. The Productive Capacities Index provided by UNCTAD can also help to achieve these objectives.

*Mr. Courtenay Rattray, High-Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS*, identified the long-term development of human capital as one of the priorities to build productive capacity, as well as investment in infrastructure. He highlighted three measures that are needed now: (i) debt relief and other financial instruments; (ii) knowledge and skills transfer with participation of the private sector; and (iii) granting regulatory privileges that lead to an increase in exports with a high domestic value share, to avoid that developing countries continue missing out on capturing value addition.

### **Voices from the field    Priorities for action post-COVID-19 - Ministerial Panel**

*H.E. Mr. Raul Cano Ricciardi, Vice Minister of Economic Relations and Integration, Paraguay*,



## **Closing remarks**

*Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs*, highlighted that the brunt of the pandemic's negative impact is being borne by LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and other countries in special situations. He noted the impact on the most vulnerable people, notably women and girls. The Joint Meeting sent a strong message on the strong link between a country's production structure and its level of human development, which should be strengthened further as it is crucial to achieving the SDGs. Developing a modern and inclusive ICT infrastructure and promoting digitalization are also critical. The Meeting also emphasized the need for LDC, LLDCs, SIDS and MICs to rapidly scale up investment for structural transformation.

*The President of the Economic and Social Council* noted that the Joint Meeting had offered multiple and rich ideas for a better understanding of the situation and efforts related to building productive capacities in countries in special situations and MICs. The meeting sent a message of conviction that building productive capacities is a critical ingredient for recovering better from COVID-19 and realizing the SDGs. The ambition, scope and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda has challenged us to change the way we think, act and live.

*The Chair of the Second Committee* concluded by stating that the Joint Meeting had reaffirmed the commitment for building productive capacities in LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, as well as MICs. Science and technology have made possible a world where we can continue to work and learn despite the pandemic. These are the visible underpinnings for building productive capacities. There is a need to continue to further build productive capacities and mobilize investments and innovation to respond to the global COVID-19 crisis and achieve the SDGs.

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