

INTRODUCTION

&X YMJ .XYFSGZQ 5WTLWFRRJ TK &HYNS SFII.N T@. N%CTH•TRNSSPL .YT FS
 end, various assessments of its implementation are being
 conducted in the lead up to the Fifth UN Conference on the
 Least Developed Countries (LDC5). It is clear that progress in
 FHMNJ[NSL YMJ .5T& LTFQX FSI TGOJHYN[JX \FX XQT\ FSI ZSJ[JS
 FRTSL YMJ 1JFX Y)J[JQTUJI (TZSYWNJX 1)(X J[JS GJKTWJ
 the COVID-19 crisis.

9MJ :SNYJI 3FYNTSX :3 IJ*SJX YMJ 1)(X FX YMJ LWTZU TK
 HZWWJSYQ^ 2JRGJW 8YFYJX KFHNLS RZQYNUQJ QTSL XYFSINSL
 structural impediments to sustainable development and char-
 FHYJWN_JI G^ QT\ MZRFS IJ[JQTURJSY FSI MNLM [ZQSJWFGNQNYNJX
 These multifaceted impediments to sustainable development
 include remoteness from markets and smallness (with many
 being landlocked or small islands), low productivity, including
 in agriculture, and high burden of communicable disease as
 well as high prevalence of natural disasters. Quite a few are
 XZKKJWNSL HTS+NHY TW JRJWLNSL KWTR TSJ 9MJ JKKJHYX TK YMJJJ
 XYWZHYZWFQ INXFI[FSYFLJX IT STY OZXY FII ZU GZY FWJ TKYJS RZ
 tually reinforcing.

In addition, LDCs have been facing challenges with respect
 to access to dedicated international support measures. For
 J]FRUQJ TSQ^ KJ\ 1)(X MF[J GJJS FGQJ YT GJSJ*Y KWTR UWJK
 erential market access and many continue to face obstacles
 NS FHHJXXNSL IJ[JQTURJSY *SFSHJ NSXYWZRJSYX <MNQJ 1)(X
 make up 14 percent of the global population they account
 KTW TSQ^ FGTZY UJWHJSY TK LQTGFQ ,WTTX)TRJXYNH 5WTIZHY
 ,)5 FSI FWTZSI UJWHJSY TK LQTGFQ YWFIJ FSI UJWHJSY TK
 global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Nevertheless, LDCs also achieved progress in various areas
 such as health, education, gender, access to information and
 HTRRZSNHFYNTSX YJHMSTQTL^ .(9 XZXYFNSFGQJ JSJWL^ J]UTWY
 concentration and governance. However, such progress has
 TKYJS STY GJJS XZK*HNJSY YT SFWWT\ YMJ LFU [NX F [NX RTWJ FI
 vanced countries, especially in areas that are crucial for accel-
 erating progress, such as tertiary education and broadband
 subscriptions. In addition, LDCs continue to be disproportion-
 ally affected by the climate crisis, with cascading effects of
 different shocks, often at the same time.

<MNQJ 1)(X INI STY KZQQ^ RJJY YMJ .5T& TGOJHYN[J TK MFQK TK
 them reaching the graduation thresholds, progress accelerat-
 ed considerably. By 2011 only 2 LDCs had graduated from the
 category, while 4 others graduated between 2011 and 2020.

¹ 8JJ :3 ITHZRJSY *
² 8JJ :3 ITHZRJSY &