

INTRODUCTION

7i j^ [7jWdXkbFhe] Hw c [e\7Yjed1Fe7Zi Yec_d] jeVd 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 W^ [I_d] j^ [Fe7] eVb WdZeX[Y] [i mW 1 emWdZ kd [I d] Vc ed] j^ [*, B[W] : [I [ef [Z9ekdjh [i 1B: 9i Z [I [dX [eh the COVID-19 crisis.

J ^ [Kd j [Z DWY edi 1KDZ [d [i j^ [B: 9i W j^ [] hek f e\ YkH [djw *, C [c X [h i jWY [i W d] c kb f h d # jWd d] structural impediments to sustainable development and char- Wj [hp [Z Xo em k c Wd Z [I [ef c [dj Wd Z ^] ^ 1 k d [HW bj [i \$ 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 i k \ [h d] Yed _Yj eh [c [h_d] Yec ed [\$ j ^ [[\ \ Yji e \] ^ [i [i j k Y j k h W d j W d j W [i Ze dej ki j V Z k f X k j W e \] d c k- tually reinforcing.

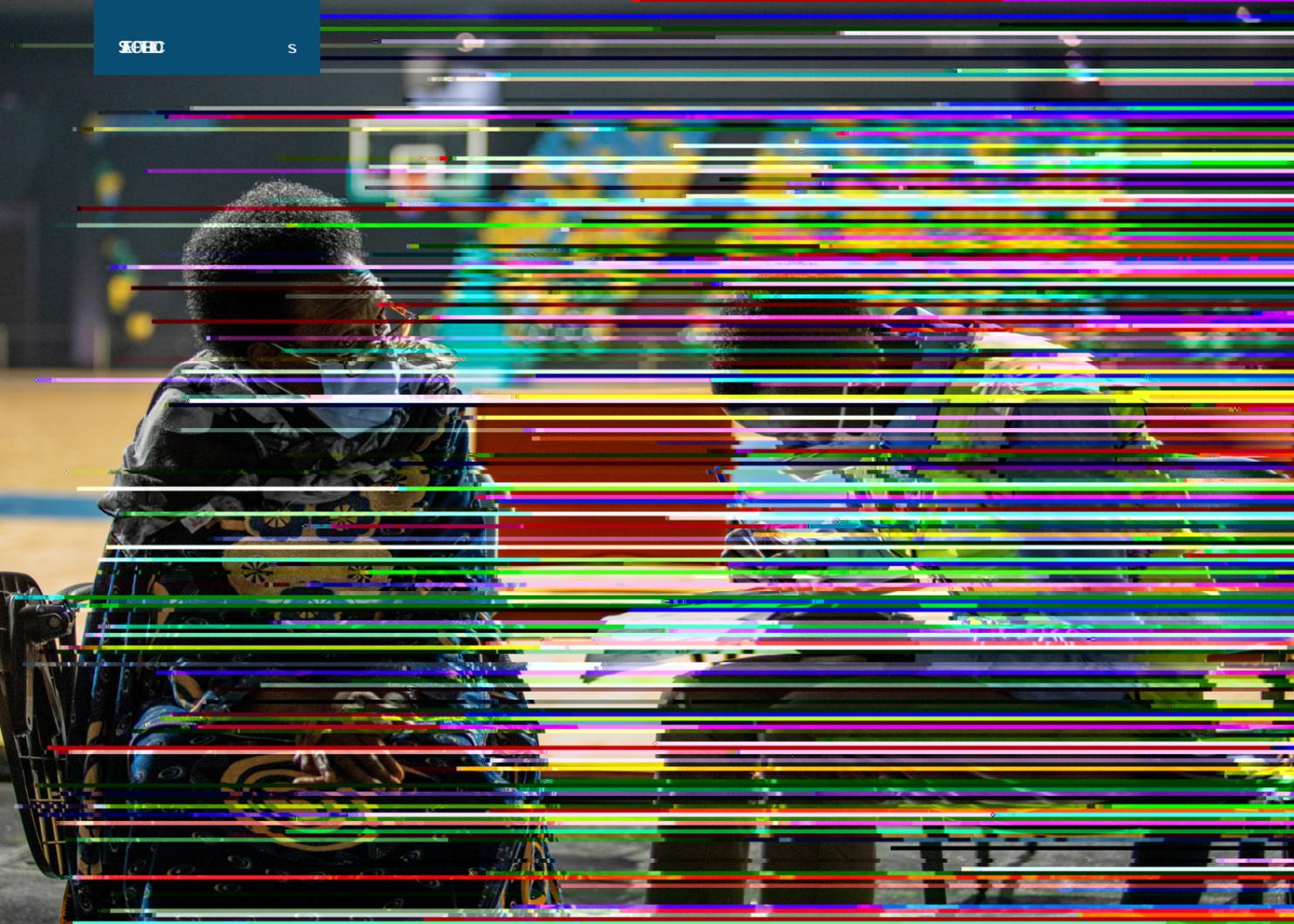
In addition, LDCs have been facing challenges with respect to access to dedicated international support measures. For [nVc f h edw \ m B: 9i W [X [[d W h j] e X [d [j] Yec F h \ erential market access and many continue to face obstacles _d W Y [i i_d] Z [I [ef c [dj] d W Y [_di j k c [d j i \$ M ^ h B: 9i make up 14 percent of the global population they account eh edw W kek j \$ F [H [dj e \] e X W = hei i : ec [i j Y F h e Z k Y] t = : F Z W d Z W e k d Z F [H [dj e \] e X W j H V Z [W d Z \$ F [H [dj e \] global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Nevertheless, LDCs also achieved progress in various areas such as health, education, gender, access to information and Yec c kd Y W Y edi j [Y ^ de] o 1 9 J Z i ki j W d W h j [d [h] o [n f e h] concentration and governance. However, such progress has e \] d dej X [[d i k \ Y [d j] e d W h e m j ^ [] W 1 _ # W _ i c e h [W Z - 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.

M ^ h B: 9i Z Z dej k h c [[j j W d W j e d ^ [W j W d b [b ee Zi X k j W e i] d _ Y W d j w ued uncertainties surrounding the pandemic duration, build-

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9		
	Average number of LDCs providing support to households	- &
92	Migrant remittance inflows to LDCs by region (USD million)	92
/-	Average LDC debt (2011–2020)	/-
(-	F [H [dj W [e \ ^ e k i [^ e z i m j ^ W d Z m j ^ e k j f [h i e d i m j ^ Z i V k b j [i living under the international poverty line (US\$1.90 a day) in 3 LDCs	(-
(-	Multidimensional poverty rates, for persons with and without disabilities, in 9 least developed countries, in 2002–2014	(-
28	F [H [dj W [e \ f [e f h m ^ e d [[Z [Z X k j Z Z dej h Y [_ [m [W W i [H _ Y [i in 5 LDCs	28
, (Total final energy consumption and share of renewables by technology type in LDCs	, (



A.1 THE AFFECT OF COVID-19 LEADERSHIP

At the time of writing,³ the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations. No country was ready to face the novel coronavirus, an invisible enemy that quickly spread across the globe wreaking havoc on even the most advanced public health systems and economies, causing immeasurable human suffering and an unprecedented global social and economic crisis. Grave concerns were immediately voiced about the disastrous effects the pandemic could have on the poorest countries with the weakest health care systems in the world, i.e. the least developed countries.