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## Foreword

At the dawn of the century, in the Millennium Declaration, the leaders of the world who had gathered for the Millennium Summit at the United Nations Headquarters in 2000 in New York undertook to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 50 world poorest nations which faced specific constraints and had special needs in their development. The Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 adopted at the Third United Nations Conference of the Least Developed Countries in 2001 in Brussels and often referred to as the Brussels Programme took those promises further by setting specific goals and targets and identifying policy actions by the LDCs and their development partners in support of those goals. Designed as a framework of partnership based on the shared but differentiated responsibilities of the LDCs and their development partners, it has become the first ever results-oriented comprehensive poverty reduction strategy tailored to the special needs of the LDCs. Those mutual responsibilities of the LDCs and their development partners are known now as commitments of the Programme of Action.

As we are heading for the High-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme in the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in September 2006 at the United Nations in New York it is worth to have a closer look at the achievements since the Third United Nations Conference and try to answer the following questions: to what extent the LDCs and development partners have achieved objectives, goals and targets of the Programme, what obstacles and challenges they are facing in its implementation, what lessons they have learned and whether there are good practices which have had a positive impact on reducing poverty and could be replicated elsewhere.

This aim of this publication has determined the structure of the chapters on the implementation of the Programme of Action which focus on progress, identify obstacles and constraints, challenges, and provide lessons learned and good practices in the implementation of each of seven commitments. The publication, by no means, aims at making an assessment. It leaves this to the upcoming the high-level meeting. Nor does it provide policy recommendations which have been clearly and in detail articulated in the Brussels Programme of Action. It identifies actions as a missing link between goals and commitments and aims to mobilize international action for attaining those goals and the overarching objective of the Brussels Programme to halve the proportion of people living in poverty and hunger by 2005.

Mr. Nelson Mandela, the Noble prize winner and the wise man of Africa, once said “Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and can be overcome and eradicated by actions of human beings”. He urged world leaders to act by saying: “Do not look the other way, do not hesitate. Recognize that the world is hungry for action, not words. Act with courage and vision”. I wholeheartedly support his words and sincerely hope they would be heard.



Anwarul K. Chowdhury  
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative

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AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infections
ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BPoA	Brussels Program of Action
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCs	Developing Countries
DDD	Digital Data Divide
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFID	UK Department of International Development
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Short-Course
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
EVI	Economic Vulnerability Index
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GCF	Gross Capital Formation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFUSA	Grameen Foundation USA
GKP	Global Knowledge Partnership
GNI	Gross National Income
HAI	Human Assets Index
HBC	High Burden Country
HDPE	High-density Polyethylene
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HYV	High Yield Variety
IADB	Inter-American Developing Bank
ICT	Information and Communications
	T









	Population (millions) 2002	Per Capita GNI (USD) (2002)	HAI	EVI	EVI (modified)
Afghanistan	23.3	523	11.6	50.1	49.0
Angola	13.9	447	25.6	48.5	46.8
Bangladesh	143.4	363	45.3	22.9	29.5
Benin	6.6	367	40.2	57.0	56.4
Bhutan	2.2	600	40.4	40.6	41.0
Burkina Faso	12.2	217	26.5	49.3	47.0
Burundi	6.7	110	19.7	53.8	49.6
Cambodia	13.8	263	44.5	49.7	48.1
Cape Verde	0.4	1323	72.0	55.5	56.7
Central African Republic	3.8	277	29.9	43.1	42.0
Chad	8.4	203	26.1	59.2	56.6
Comoros	0.7	387	38.1	59.1	58.7
Democratic Republic of Congo	54.3	100	34.3	40.8	42.3
Djibouti	0.7	873	30.2	48.6	49.5
Equatorial Guinea	0.5	743	47.2	64.4	55.8
Eritrea	4.0	190	32.8	51.7	50.2
Ethiopia	66.0	100	25.2	42.0	40.7
Gambia	1.4	340	34.0	60.8	56.5
Guinea	8.4	447	30.3	42.1	40.0
Guinea-Bissau	1.3	170	31.2	64.6	60.7
Haiti	8.4	447	30.3	42.1	40.0
Kiribati	0.1	923	67.5	64.8	60.4
Lao People's Democratic Republic	5.5	297	46.4	43.9	43.4
Lesotho	2.1	573	45.4	44.2	44.5
Liberia	3.3	285	38.7	63.1	58.3
Madagascar	16.9	253	37.9	21.6	27.0
Malawi	11.8	177	39.0	49.0	49.4
Maldives	0.3	1983	65.2	33.6	37.5
Mali	12.0	230	19.9	47.5	45.4
Mauritania	2.8	377	38.2	38.9	37.7
Mozambique	19.0	220	20.0	35.6	39.2
Myanmar	49.0	282	60.0	45.4	45.6
Nepal	24.2	240	47.1	29.5	31.0
Niger	11.6	180	14.2	54.1	53.1
Rwanda	8.1	230	34.1	63.3	59.6
Samoa	0.2	1447	88.8	40.9	50.8

## 2. The Brussels Programme of Action

On 20 May 2001, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Brussels adopted the Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010 subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001. The overarching goal of the Programme is "to make substantial progress toward halving the proportion of people living in e

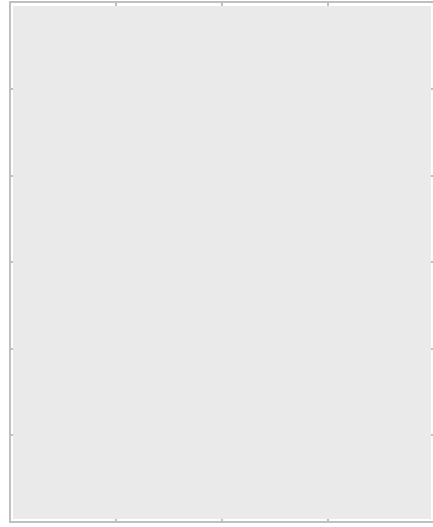




## 3. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action

### 3.1 Commitment 1: Fostering a People-Centred Policy Framework

*The overarching goal of the Brussels Programme of Action is to make substantial progress toward*



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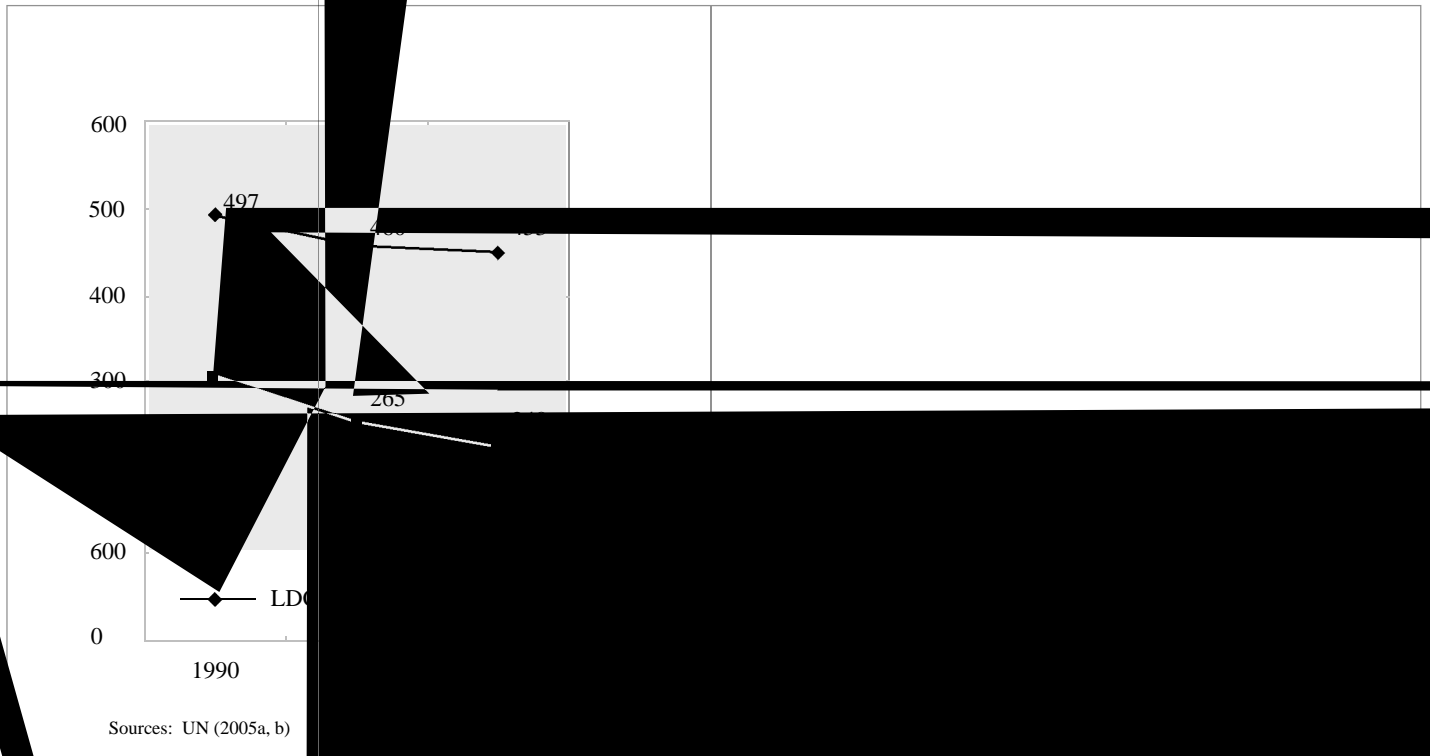




Despite progress to date, public accountability continues to be a challenge for many LDCs. Progress has been uneven and there is room for further progress. Institutions and mechanisms to enhance accountability include: the legislature or parliament through the operation of opposition parties, oversight committees, etc.; government budgets, published data on public finances, annual accounts, audits, reviews and evaluations; internal procedures and mechanisms with the public service such as results-based management techniques to assess and reward public sector performance; the judiciary and the courts to sanction public officials in cases of unlawful conduct; direct involvement of citizen's groups to provide oversight through such instruments as participatory auditing, civil society funded service quality surveys (e.g. Report Cards), people's budgets, etc.

Uganda (Box 4 below), provides a good example of a success story in improving public finance management through mechanisms designed to enhance accountability

The WHO estimates that every year 8 million people contract TB, of whom 95 percent live in Developing countries. About 2 million people die every year, and almost half a million people are co-infected with HIV. As shown in Figure 5, the TB prevalence has risen for LDCs by around 10% between 1990 and 2003 while the death rate has fallen by around 15% over this same period (Figure 6). These rates of reduction fall short of those required to meet the Brussels Programme of Action MDG targets mentioned above.

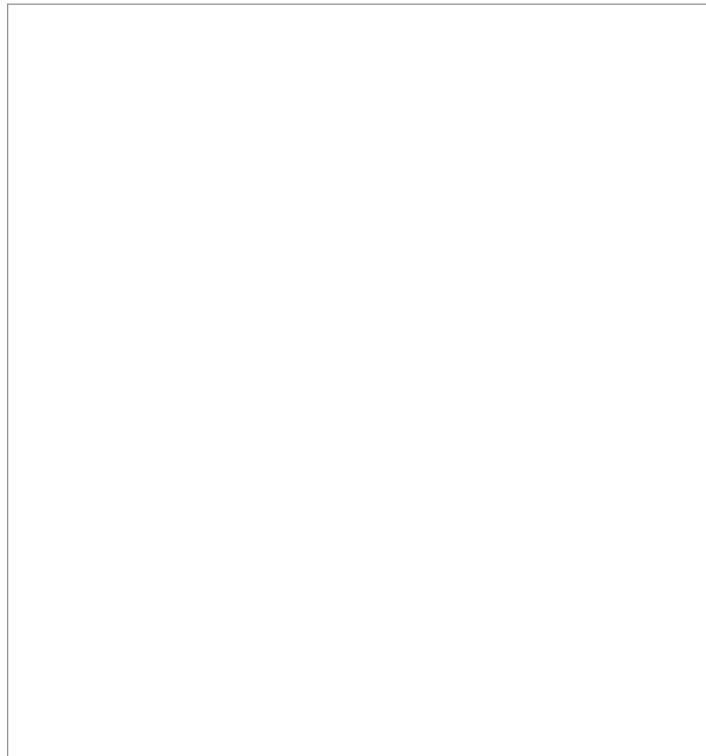




### 3.3.3 HIV/AIDS

Reducing infection rates of HIV/AIDS, and associated deaths, are central objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action. It has adopted the MDG goal of reducing infection rates in persons 15-24 years of age by 2005 in all countries and by 25 percent in the most affected countries.

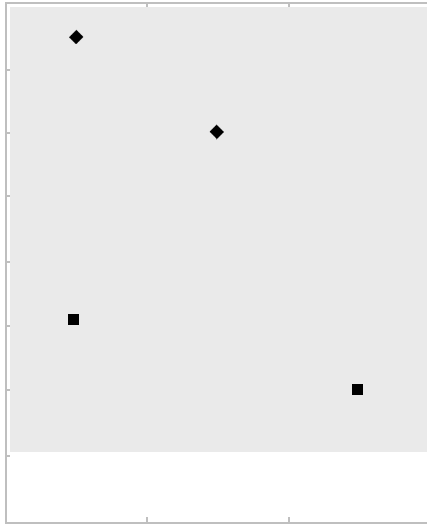
Over the past two decades, 30 million people have died from HIV/AIDS and another 40 million are infected. In 2003, the estimated prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in LDCs was 3.2 percent (Figure 7). However, in most African LDCs, the prevalence rate among adults is much higher. This is especially true in sub-Saharan Africa where approximately 28.5 million people are infected. Among the LDCs with the highest official prevalence rates in the world, are Lesotho (28.9 percent), Zambia (16.5 percent), Malawi (14.2 percent) and the Central African Republic (13.5 percent).



Effective strategies to combat HIV/AIDS need to address prevention, treatment and long-term care. Prevention entails increasing awareness of the disease and modifying social norms and behaviour which place individuals at risk. The most effective treatment involves the provision of antiretroviral treatment (ART) which at present is available to only 8% of the estimated 6 million people with AIDS. On World AIDS Day 2003, WHO and UNAIDS released a plan to reach the 3 by 5 target of three million people living with AIDS in Developing countries and those in transition by the end of 2005. Uganda provides an example where many of these elements came together with very impressive results (Box 7).

#### **Box 7. Uganda: HIV/AIDS**

Uganda is often heralded as a success story in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The country has not been spared, however, from the devastating effects of the disease. Since the onset of the epidemic in the late 1980s, over 2 million people have been infected with HIV/AIDS and close to 900,000 people have lost their lives to the disease. The government's response, however, w



Sources: UN (2005a, b); UNICEF (2004a, b)



### **3.3.5 Primary Education**

Education is a core concern of the Br



Despite uncertainties about the data, the causes of maternal mortality are well known. Approximately 61 percent of maternal deaths take place during delivery or immediately after due to excessive b

**Box 11. The Maldives: Water & Sanitation**

Island ecosystems, such as the Maldives', are among the most vulnerable on Ear

### **3.4 Building Productive Capacities to Make Globalization Work for LDCs**

*The capacity of LDCs to accelerate growth and sustainable development is impeded b*

- Sixth, in some cases ICTs have facilitated gender equality in poverty-relevant ways by facilitating female access to learning and by providing economic opportunities for women as in the Grameen Village Phone Initiative (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).
- Seventh, ICTs can be used to support livelihoods, especially in agriculture and community development. For example, multipurpose community telecasters have been active in support of micro and family enterprises such as crafts, ag

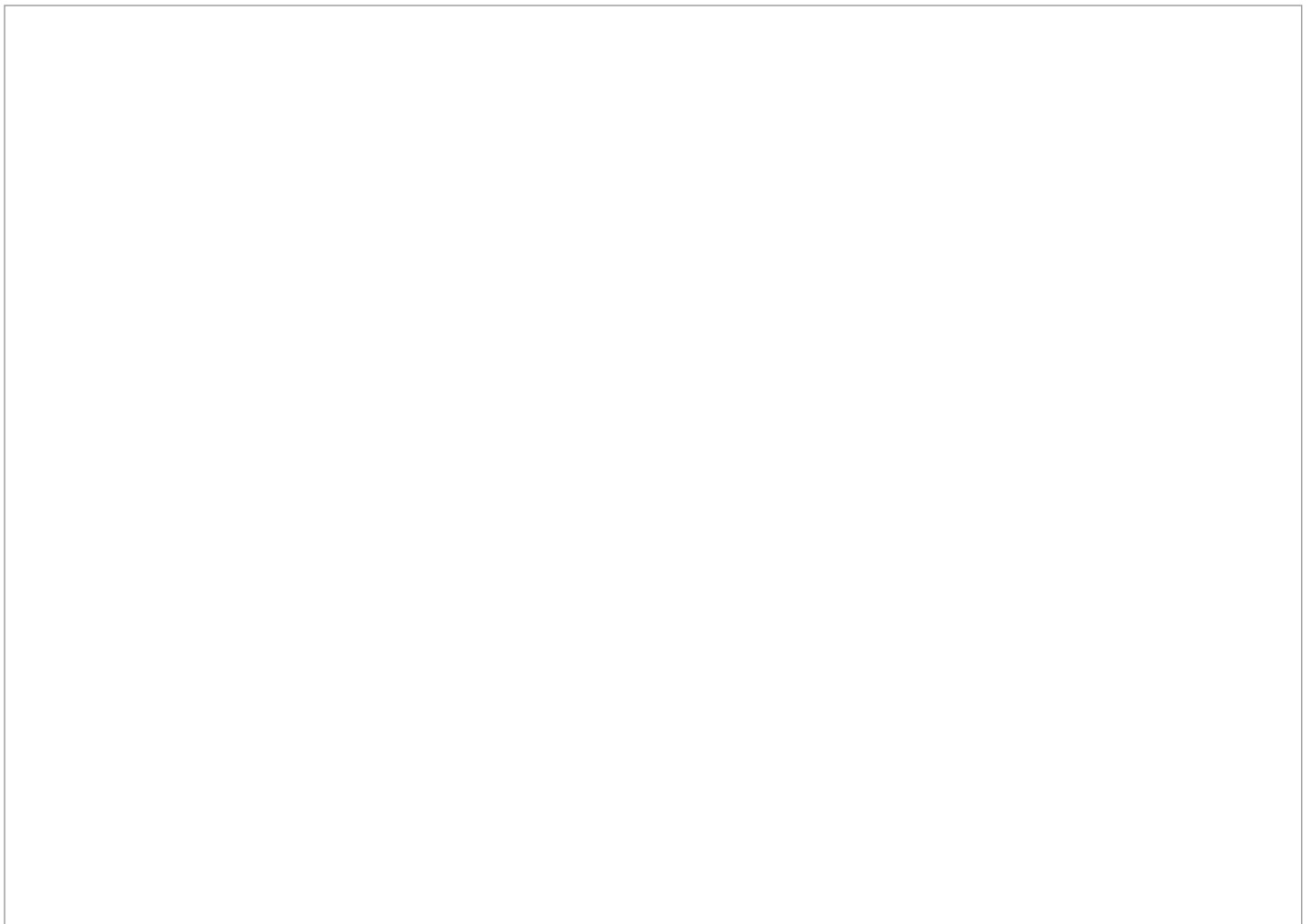
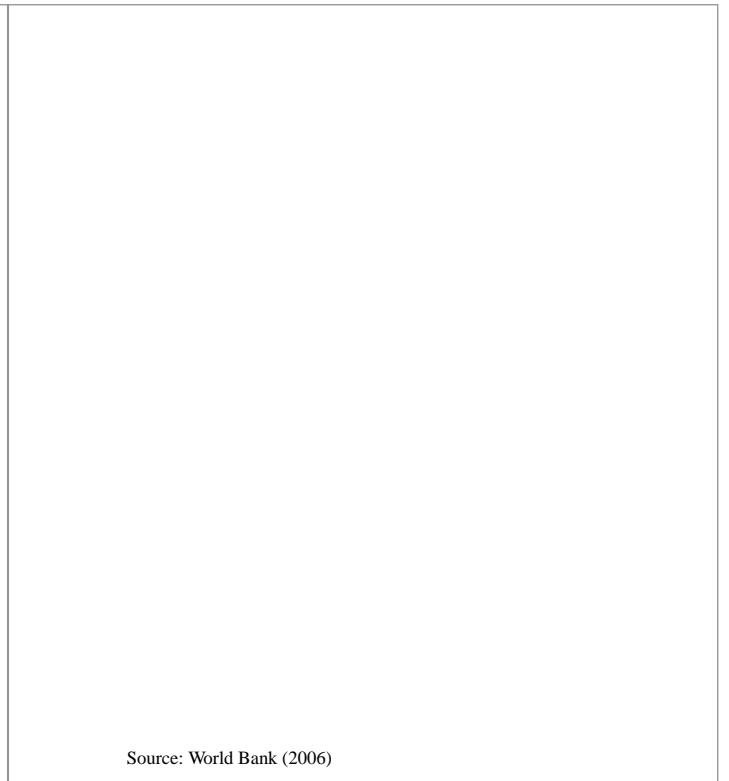
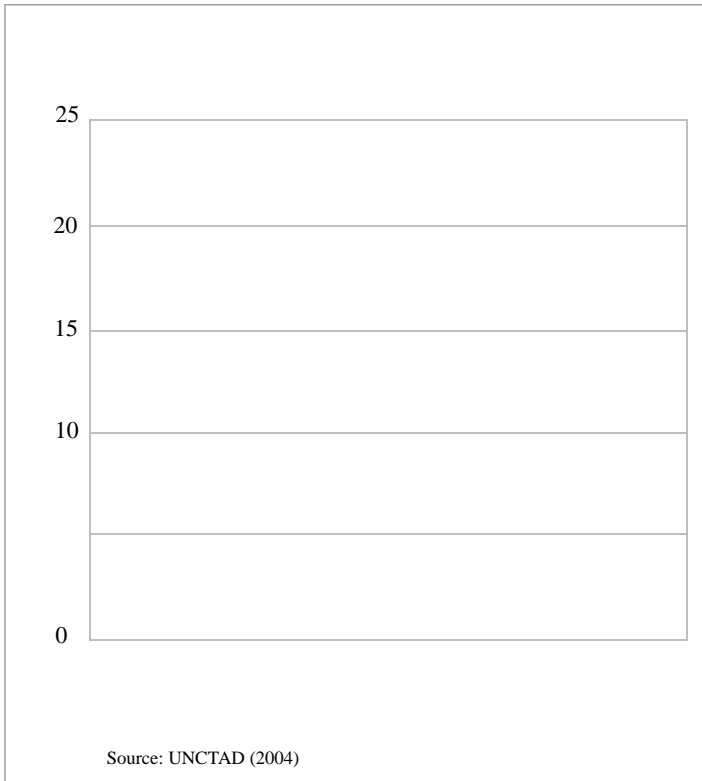
### **Box 12. Cambodia: Digital Data Divide (DDD)**

Digital Data Divide (DDD) began in Phnom Penh in 2001. Its underlying philosophy was that the world must do more than build Internet lines and give computers. People need to be connected to ICT resources in a way that results in tangible benefits to their everyday lives. As a result, DDD connects young people facing particularly difficult circumstances in one of the world's LDCs, with the global economy. It provides jobs and educational opportunities by providing outsourced data services to business and public sector customers. DDD only hires individuals under 25 who are orphans, physically disabled or trafficked women.

After only nine months, DDD became a financially self-sustainable enterprise. From 2001 to 2004, DDD earned more than \$US 450,000 in revenue and had over 170 staff. The benefits have been far reaching. DDD had created a significant number of well paying jobs and provided scholarships for education, health benefits and vocational counselling.

## **3.5 Enhancing the Role of Trade in Development**

*Trade will increasingly continue to be relied upon by LDCs to generate the resources for financing growth and development to complement those from ODA and private capital flows. The share of trade in GDP remains relatively high in most LDCs compared with other developing countries. However, the participation of LDCs in international trade is severely limited by a number of factors,*





**Table 5 Trade/Poverty Performance of LDCs (No. of Cases)**

<b>Real Growth Rate of Private Consumption Per Capita</b>				
<b>Virtuous ( Greater than 1%)</b>		<b>Ambiguous (Btn. -1% and 1%)</b>		<b>Immiserising (Less than 1%)</b>
1990-95	1995-2000	1995-2000	1995-2000	

**Box 13. Bangladesh: 'Virtuous Trade'**

Bangladesh is one of only three countries to fall into the 'virtuous' trade category in 1990-95 and 1995-2000, whereby export expansion was accompanied by growth in private consumption. There are a number of reasons for this virtuous trade effect.

First, export growth was concentrated in manufacturing. Employment growth and wage increases in this sector led to relatively widespread gains. While there were job losses in sectors unable to compete with cheaper imports, these were more than offset by new job opportunities in the export sector.

Second, the export sector

derive a significant proportion of their total income from them. Forests, fisheries (marine and freshwater), farm fields, livestock production, hunting, and mining provide sustenance and act as a fall-back when other sources of employment falter. As a result, the rural poor are especially vulnerable to ecosystem degradation.

Today, many ecosystem services are being used unsustainably, and the capacity of ecosystems to deliver these services is being persistently eroded at an unprecedented rate all around the world mainly due to desertification, soil erosion and deforestation (see Box 14). One element in the global strategy to reverse this trend is the creation of and/or expansion of protected areas. Protected areas are essential for conserving biodiversity, delivering vital ecosystem services, such as soil regeneration, nutrient cycling, pollination, pure water and maintenance of harvestable resources, providing protection and space for indigenous and local peoples to continue their traditional lifestyles (culturally, spiritually, and recreationally) that are often impossible elsewhere, and providing local people with additional sources of income, through increased tourism or employment opportunities offered in the protected space.

#### **Box 14. Main Causes of Ecosystem Degradation**

##### *Desertification*

Desertification is land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from climatic variations and human activities. Approximately 250 million people are directly affected by desertification, and a further 1.1 billion people indirectly affected. Desertification occurs because drylands, which cover more than 40% of the world's surface, are extremely vulnerable to over-exploitation and inappropriate land use, such as deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices.

##### *Soil Erosion/Degradation*

Soil degradation is the change induced by the natural decrease in the soils' potential for producti

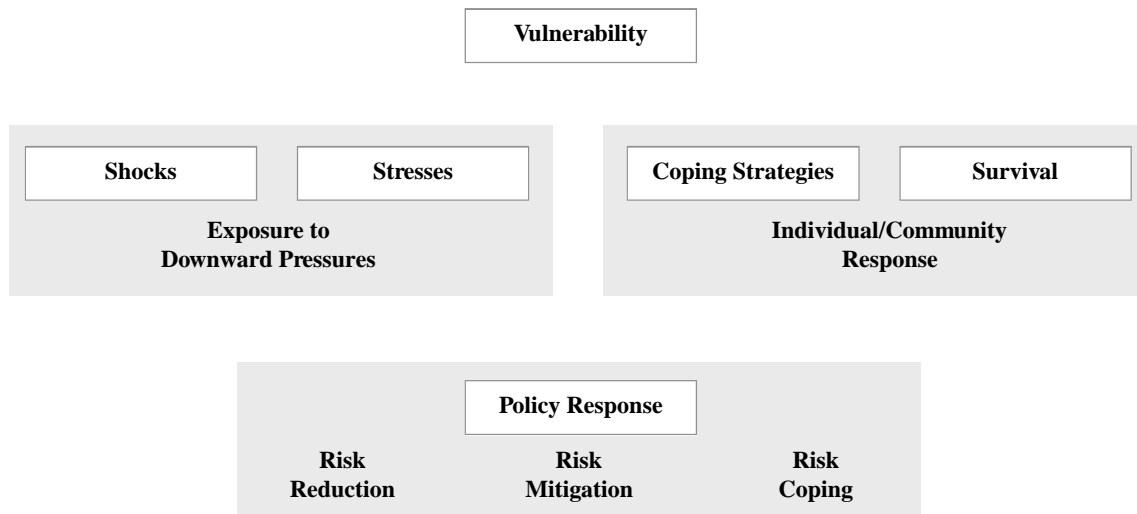
The development and maintenance of protected areas face a number of challenges. Many protected areas lack political support and have inadequate financial resources, thereby existing in name only ('paper parks'). Even where they exist, regulations are often inadequate for preventing damaging activities, such as over-fishing. Additional external threats include pollution and climate change, irresponsible tourism, infrastructure development and ever increasing demands for land and water resources. Internal threats to protected areas include major habitat change caused by infringement, often by human settlement, and legal or illegal resource extraction resulting in the disappearance of the species or resource for which the protected area was created.

Mozambique provides an example of the successful establishment of protected areas to the apparent benefit of local communities (Box 15).

### **Box 15. Mozambique: Protected Areas**

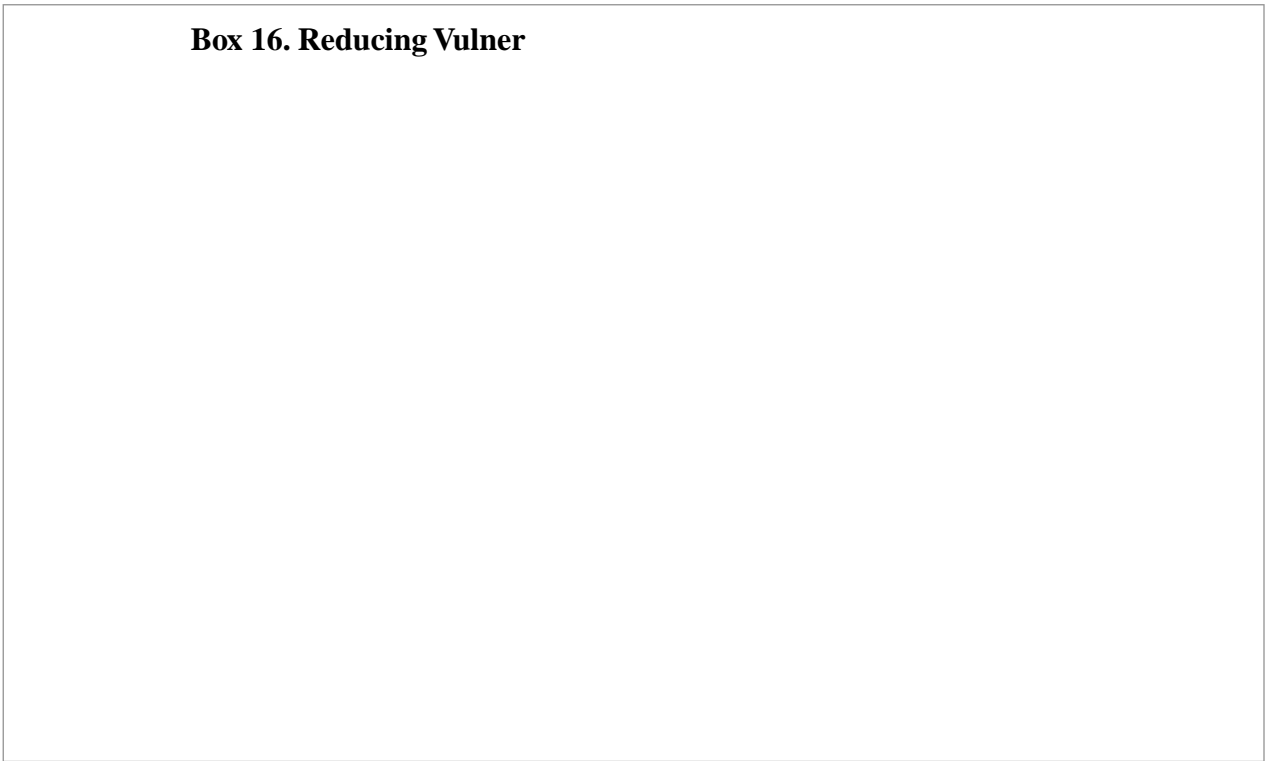
Mozambique has become one of Africa's

**Figure 20 The Cycle of Vulnerability**



Source: Shaffer (2004)

**Box 16. Reducing Vulner**



- First, poverty reduction has emerged as a core objective of development assistance. This is due to the growing perception among the development community that government and donor efforts should focus on the core, pressing development needs.
- Second, national ownership of development policy has assumed central importance. The commitment to national ownership has been guided by the recognition that national commitment is essential for successful implementation of policies. In the absence of national commitment, appropriate policies are neither accepted nor implemented.
- Third, there has been a call for new forms of partnerships to supersede traditional donor-recipient relationships. This has entailed a greater reliance on national development frameworks and planning processes and a move away from project-based lending to sector wide approaches and direct budgetary support.
- Fourth, there has been a concerted move to judge performance using results-based criteria. In practice, this entails greater reliance on performance criteria based on outputs, outcomes or impacts. Impact evaluations, audits and public expenditure reviews are examples of the tools which have been used to bring about a results-based focus.

All of these changes reflect changes in the 'quality' of ODA with a view to make it more effective. Equally important are increases in the quantity of ODA to finance necessary investments in LDCs. Figure 21 and







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Map	ITU (2005a)
Chapter 1:	UNCTAD (2004)
Chapter 2:	UN (2001b, c, 2003); UN-OHRLLS (2005a)
Chapter 3:	
3.1:	AFD et al. (2005); Brück and van den Broeck (2006); FA

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