

Short course for Permanent Missions in  
Geneva

# Where is the LDC group heading in the future?

11 December 2025

Delivered by the LDC Section, UNCTAD

Short course for Geneva-based diplomats

# Session 2: How will the LDC group look in the future?

11 December 2025

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# **Background**

- ▶ Uneven progress among LDCs
- ▶ Some LDCs are progressing toward graduation, but for a majority, it remains distant
- ▶ Structural vulnerabilities persist
- ▶ Support needs are long-term

# ➤ **8 countries have graduated from LDC status**

- ▶ Botswana in December 1994
- ▶ Cabo Verde in December 2007
- ▶ Maldives in January 2011
- ▶ Samoa in January 2014
- ▶ Equatorial Guinea in June 2017
- ▶ Vanuatu in December 2020
- ▶ Bhutan in December 2023
- ▶ Sao Tome and Principe in December 2024

# ➤ Of the 44 remaining LDCs, 17 have reached at least 1 milestone on the graduation path

Country	Status	Details
Bangladesh	Graduation date set	24 Nov 2026
Lao PDR	Graduation date set	24 Nov 2026
Nepal	Graduation date set	24 Nov 2026
Solomon Islands	Graduation date set	13 Dec 2027
Cambodia	Graduation date set	19 Dec 2029
Senegal	Graduation date set	19 Dec 2029
Djibouti	Recommended for graduation by CDP	under consideration by ECOSOC
Kiribati	Recommended for graduation by CDP	under consideration by ECOSOC
Tuvalu	Recommended for graduation by CDP	under consideration by ECOSOC
Comoros	Met criteria 2 times (2021, 2024)	CDP decision deferred to 2027
Myanmar	Met criteria 3 times (2018, 2021, 2024)	CDP decision deferred to 2027
Rwanda	Met criteria once (2024)	To be reconsidered in 2027
Uganda	Met criteria once (2024)	To be reconsidered in 2027
United Republic of Tanzania	Met criteria once (2024)	To be reconsidered in 2027
Angola	Scheduled graduation deferred	No longer meets criteria ( 2024)
Timor-Leste	Met criteria three times (2015, 2018, 2021)	No longer meets criteria ( 2024)
Zambia	Met criteria once (2021)	No longer meets criteria ( 2024)



# 27 LDCs have not yet reached any of the graduation milestones

Africa (24)
Benin
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Central African Republic
Chad
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gambia
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mozambique
Niger
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Togo

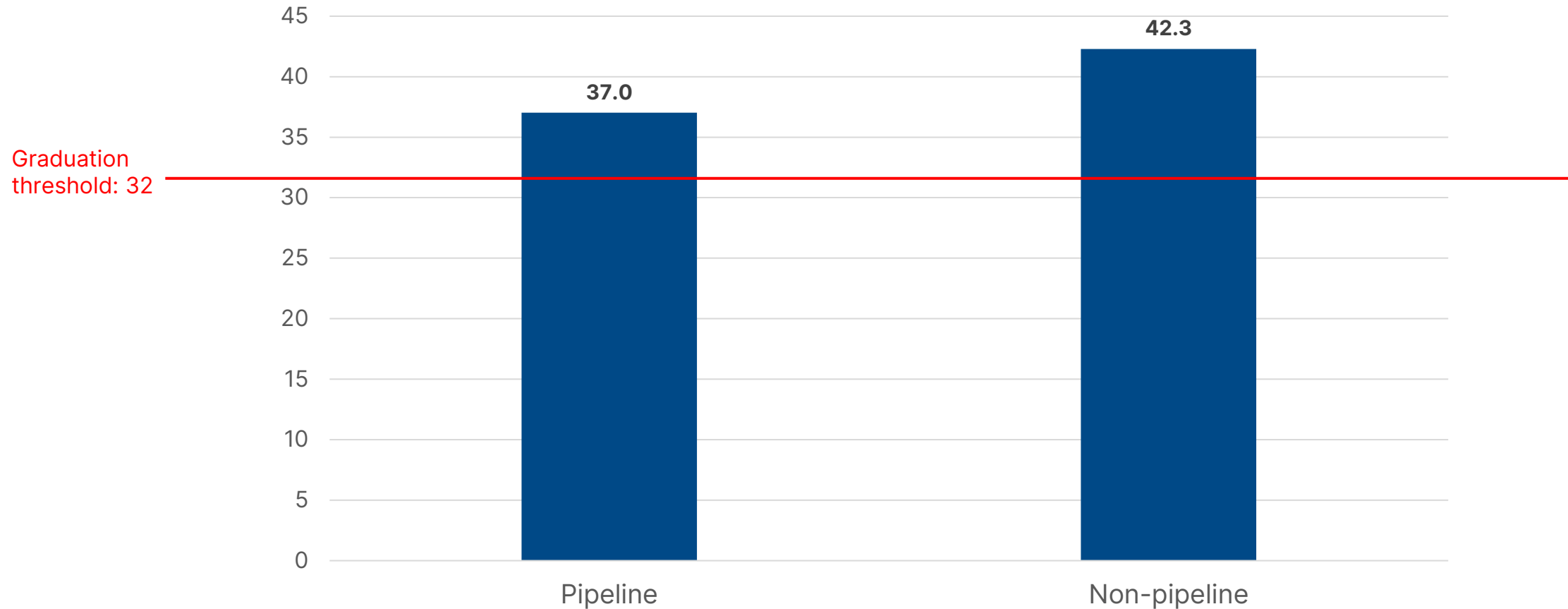
Asia (2)
Afghanistan
Yemen

Caribbean (1)
Haiti



# LDC criterion I: Economic and environmental vulnerability

Average economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI)  
CDP 2024 triennial review

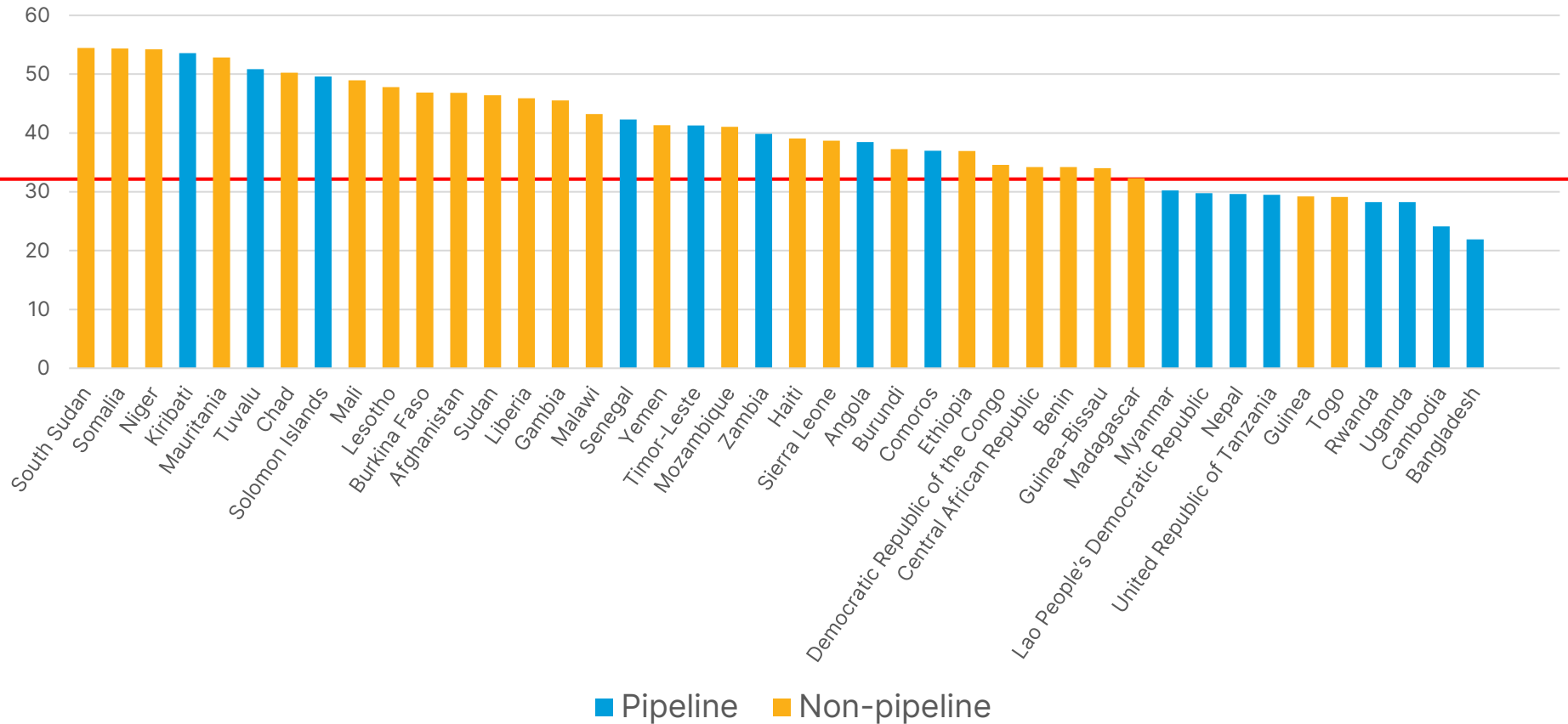




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Economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI)  
CDP 2024 triennial review

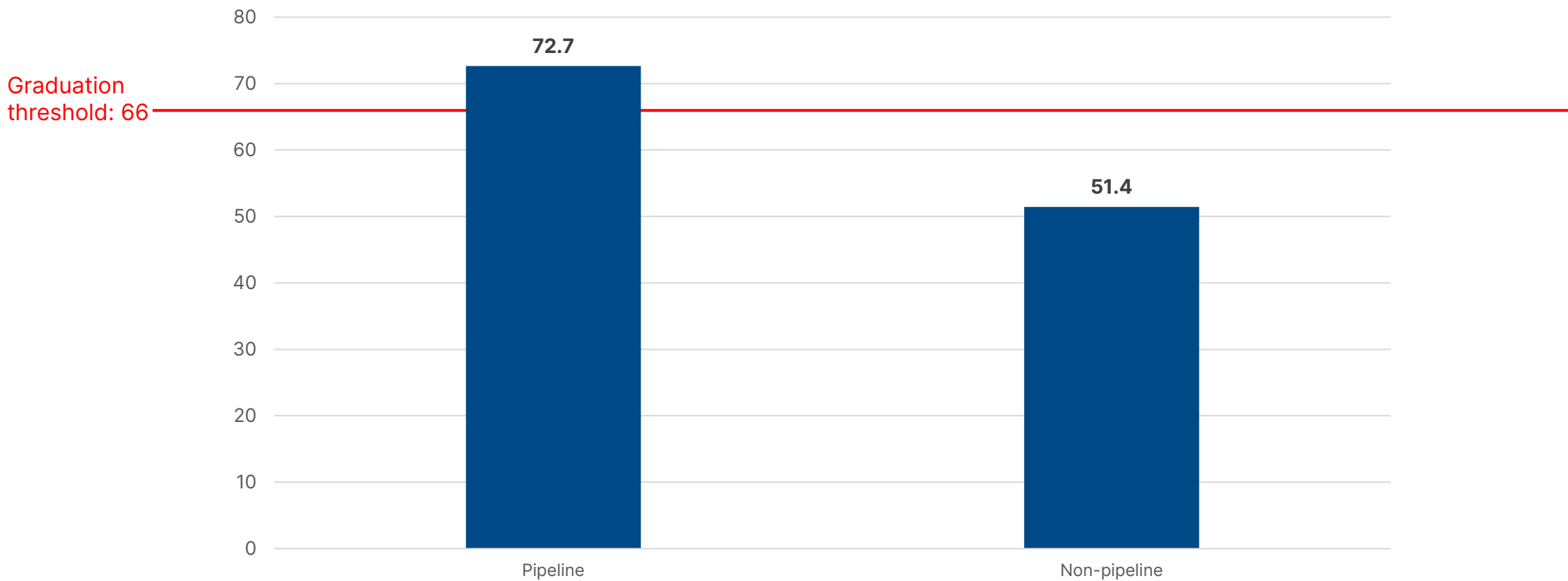
Graduation  
threshold: 32



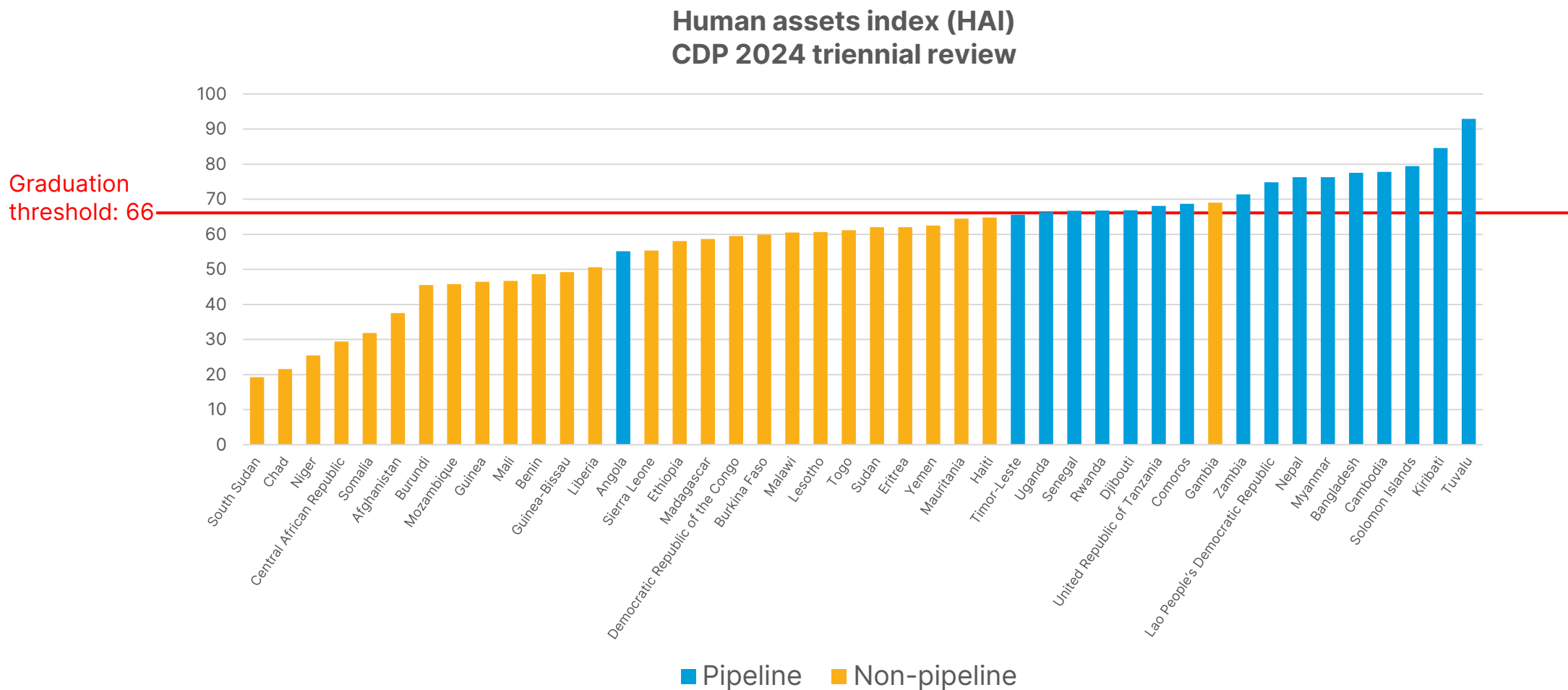


# LDC criterion II: Human assets

Average human assets index (HAI)  
CDP 2024 triennial review

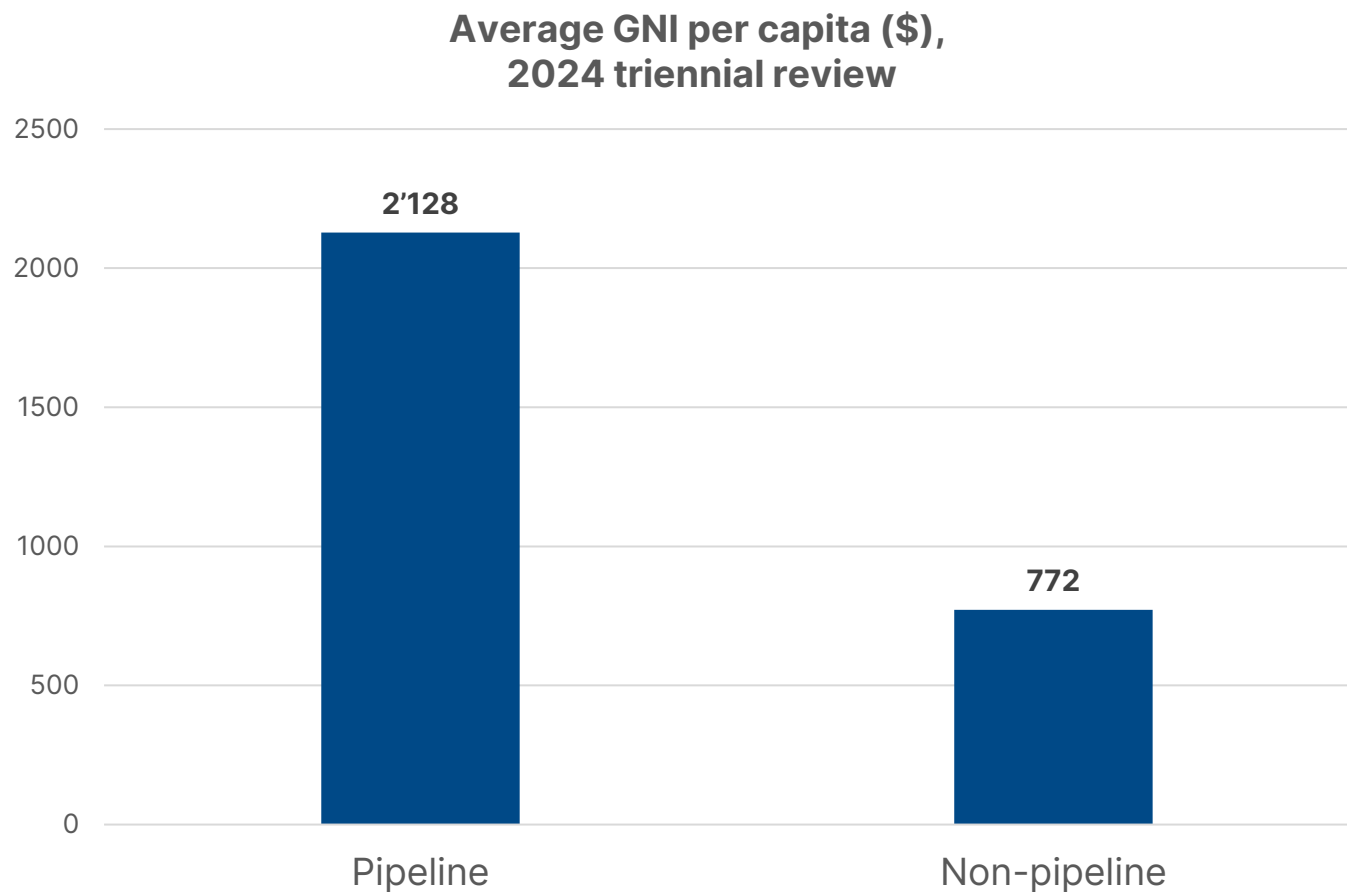


# LDC criterion II: Human assets

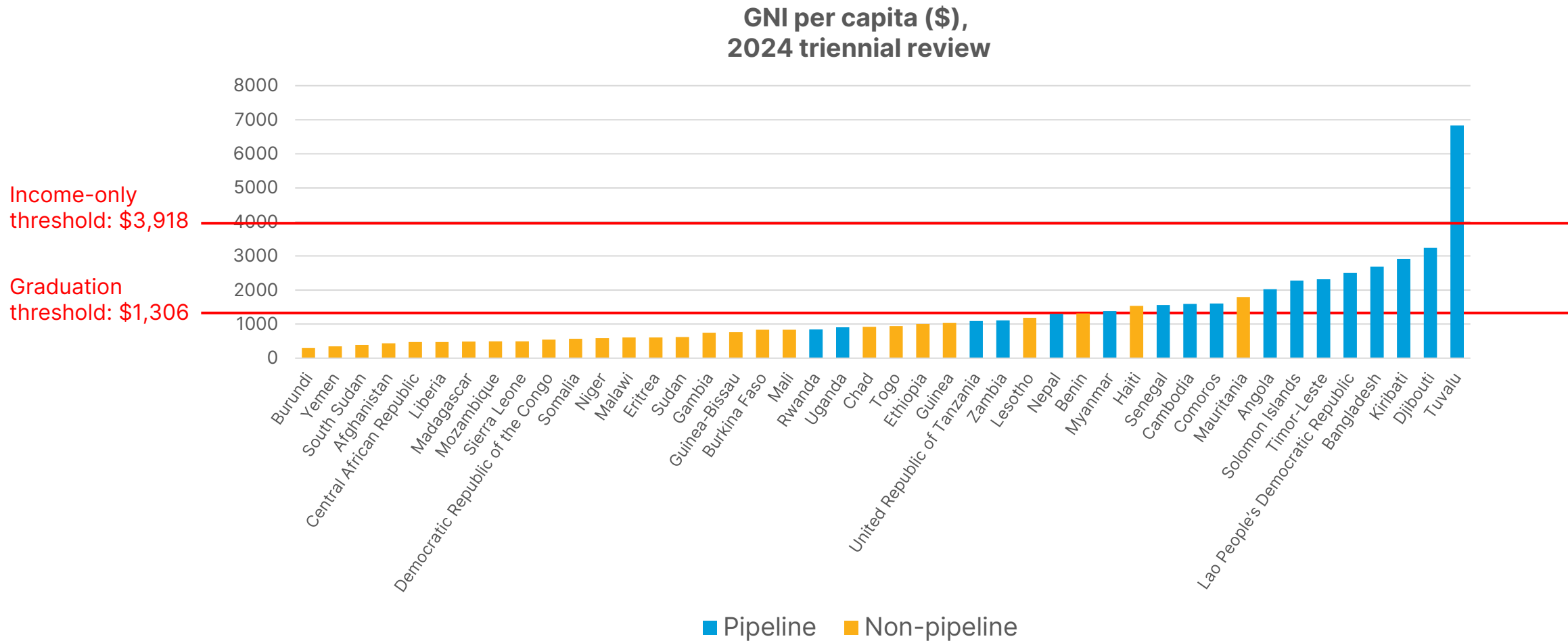




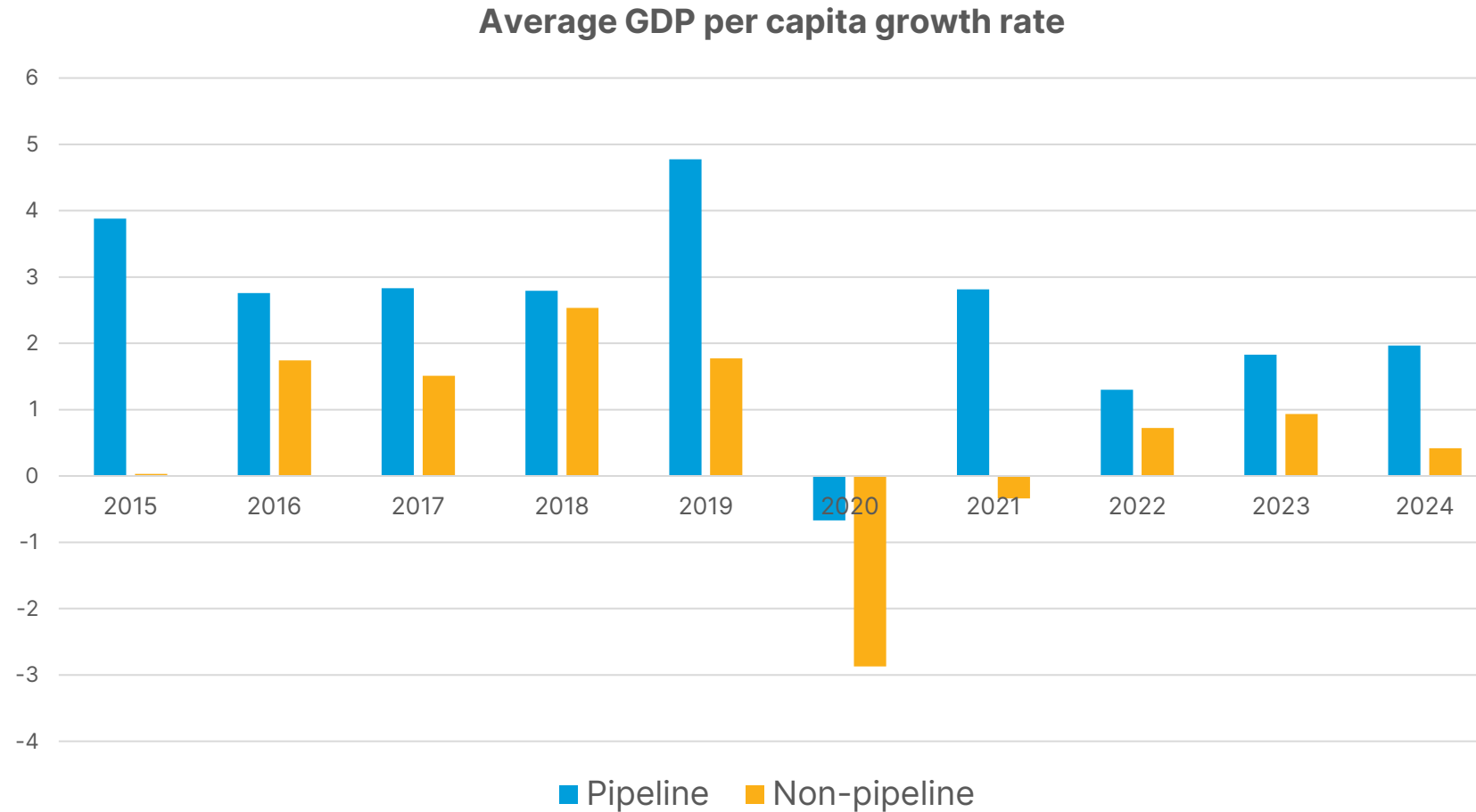
# LDC criterion III: GNI per capita



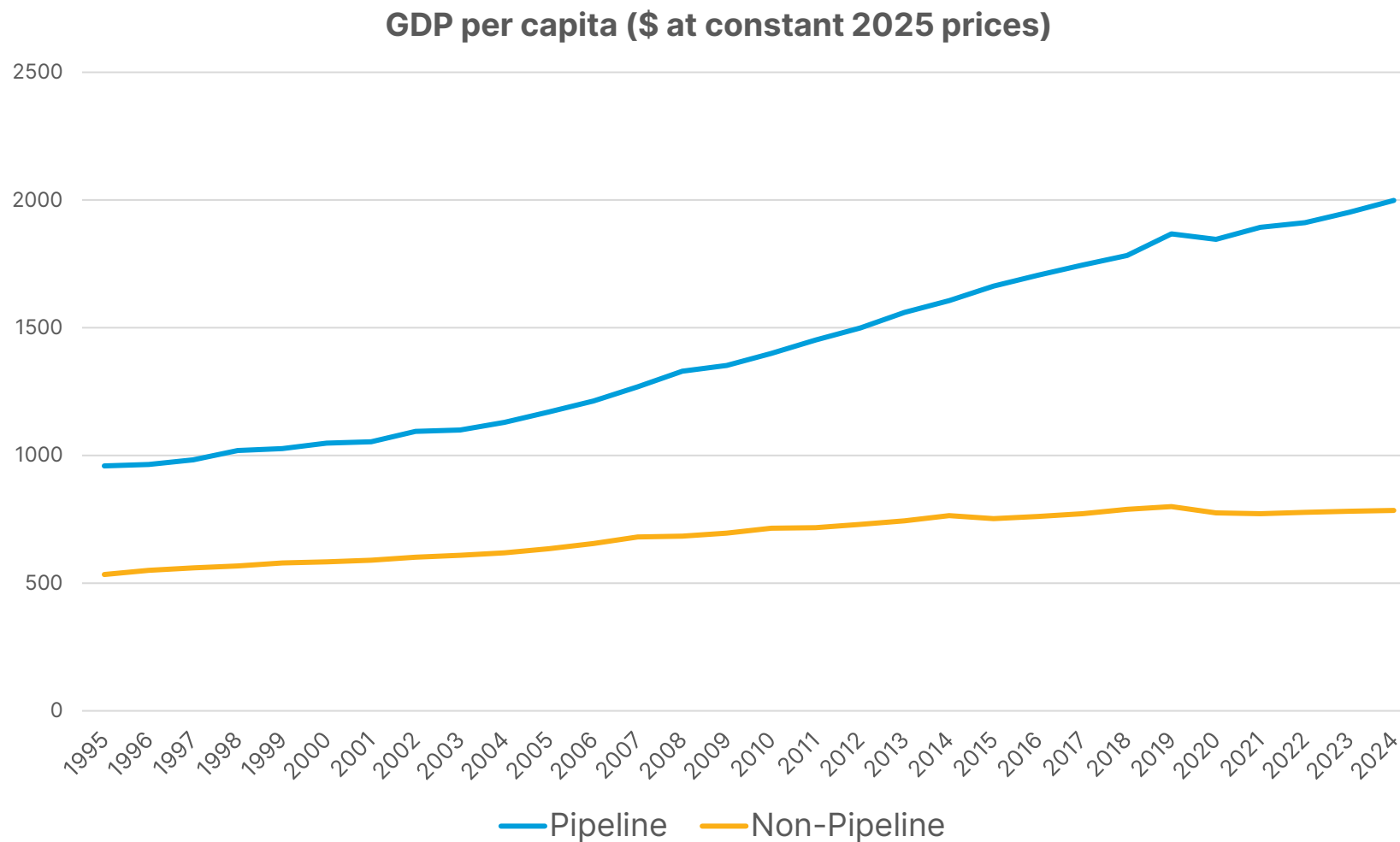
# > LDC criterion III: GNI per capita



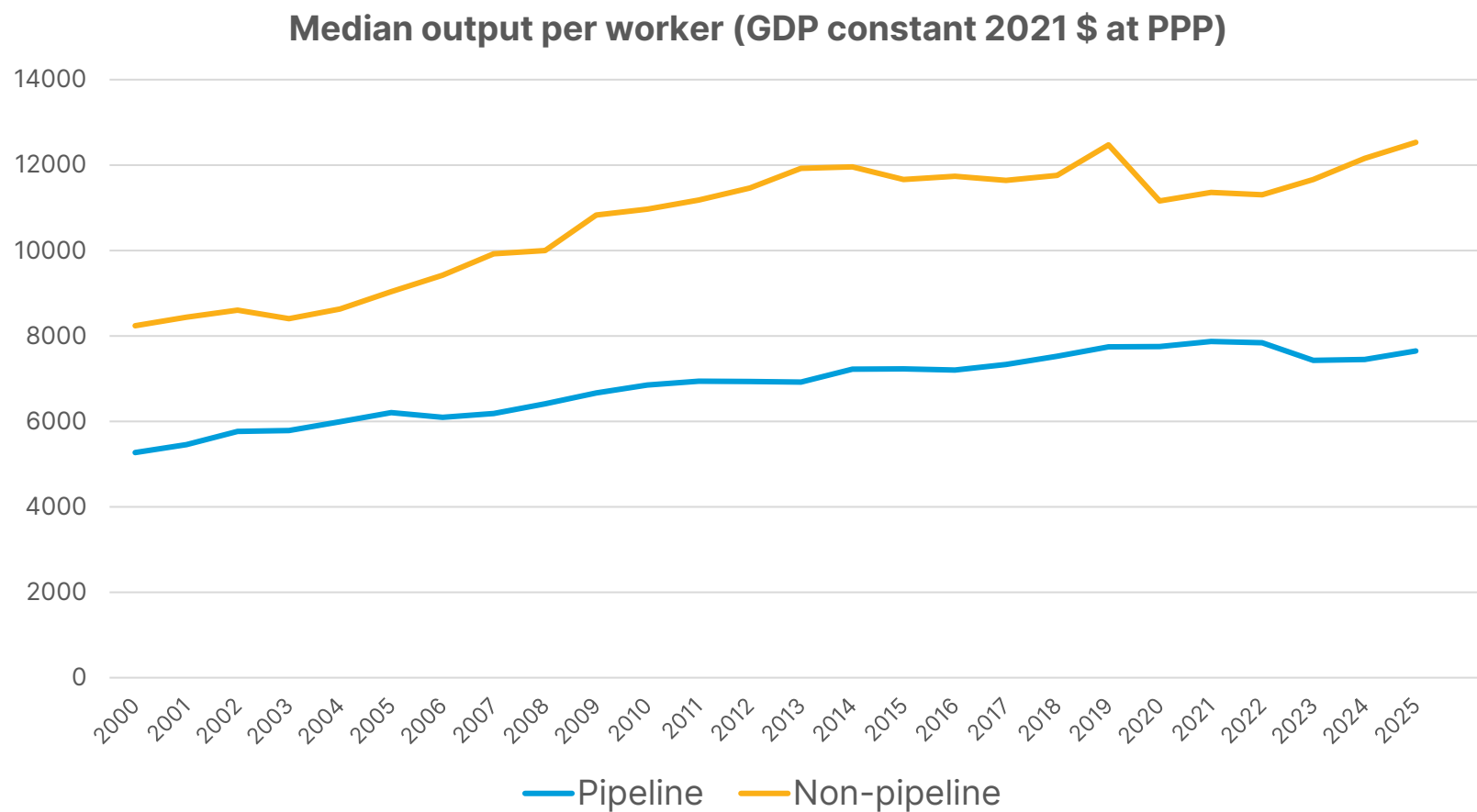
# ➤ Income per capita growth in pipeline LDCs is stronger and more resilient



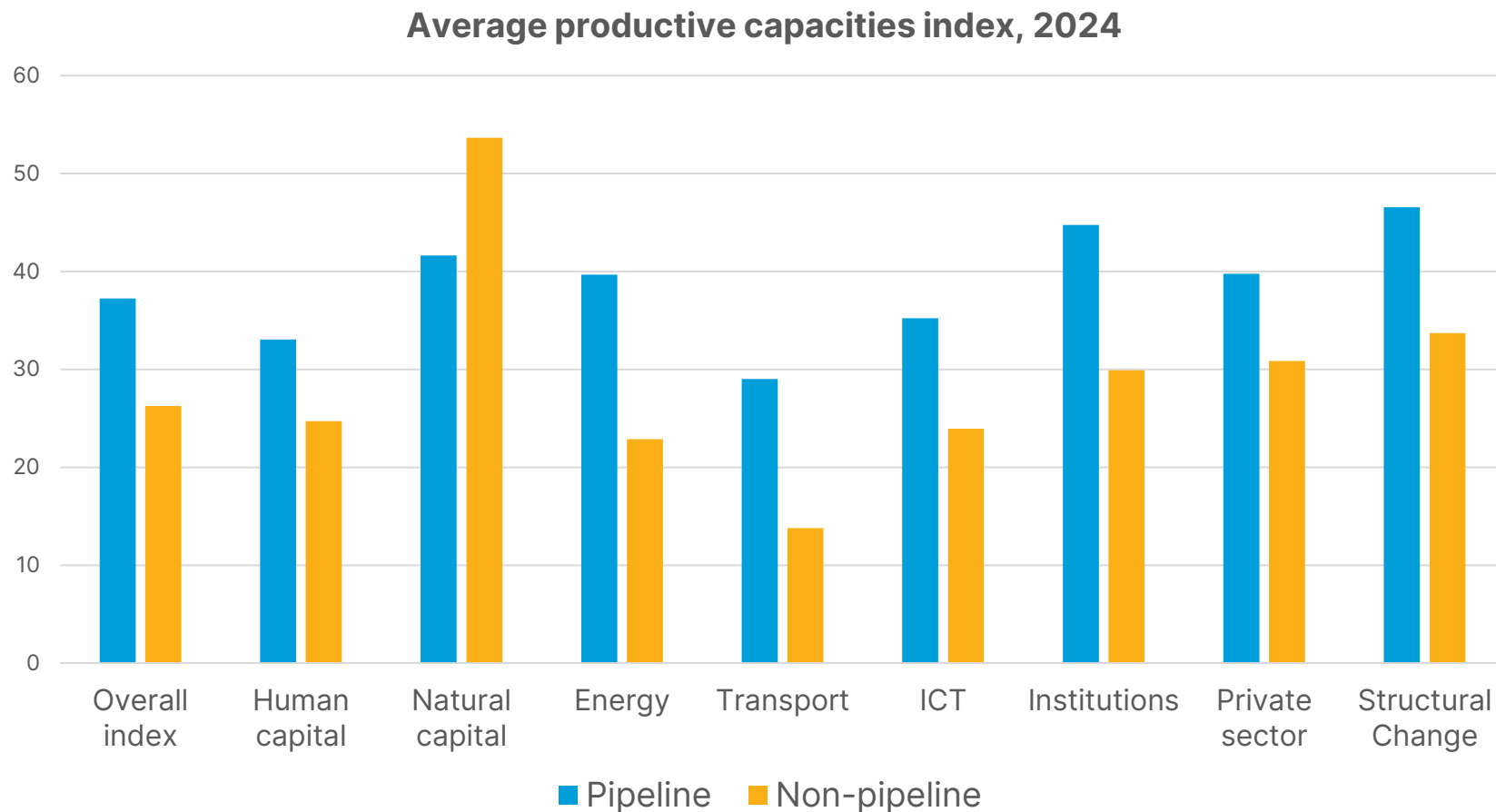
# > Income per capita: divergence



# Labour productivity: widening gap

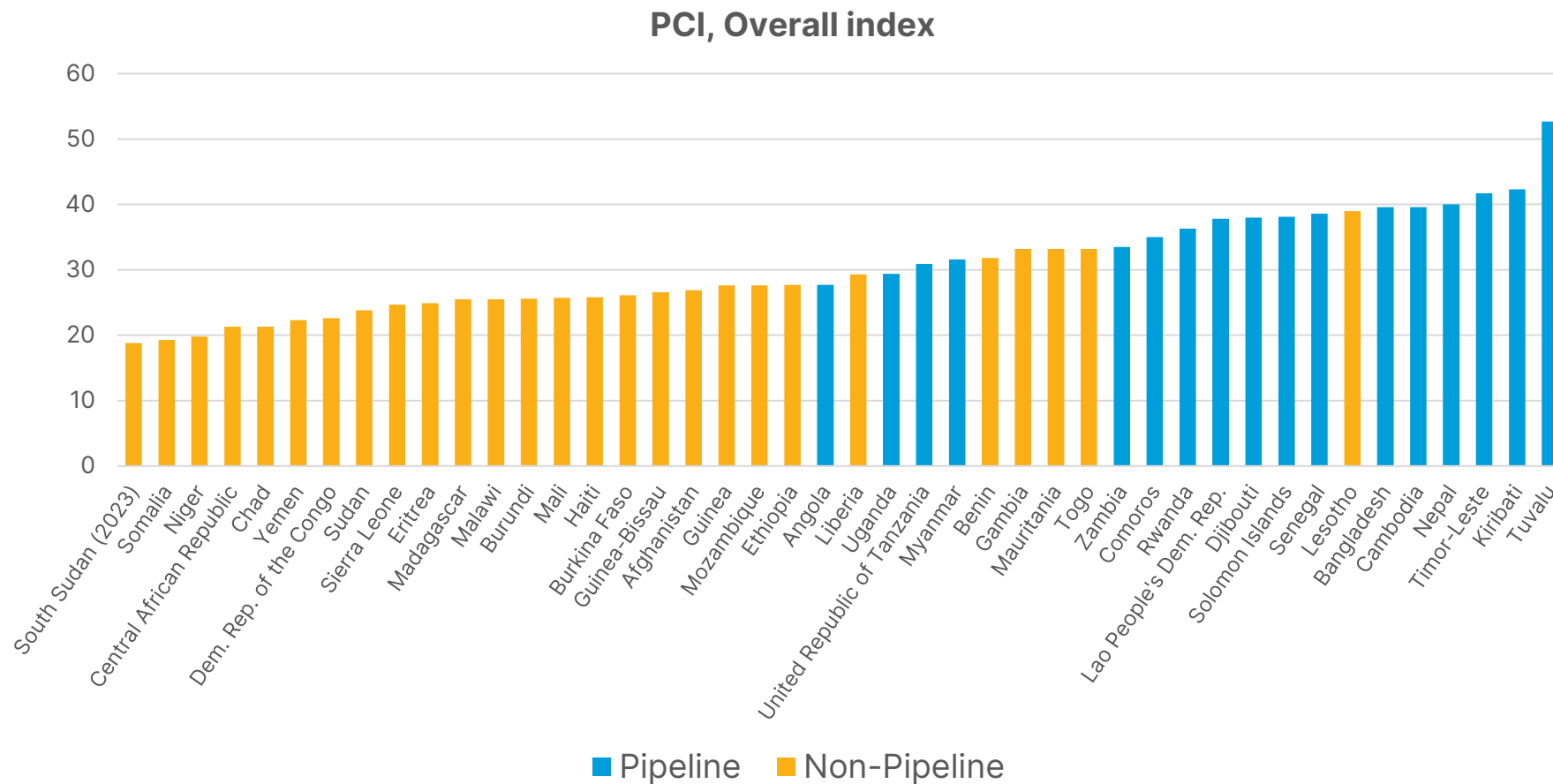


# ➤ Non-pipeline LDCs have weaker productive capacities

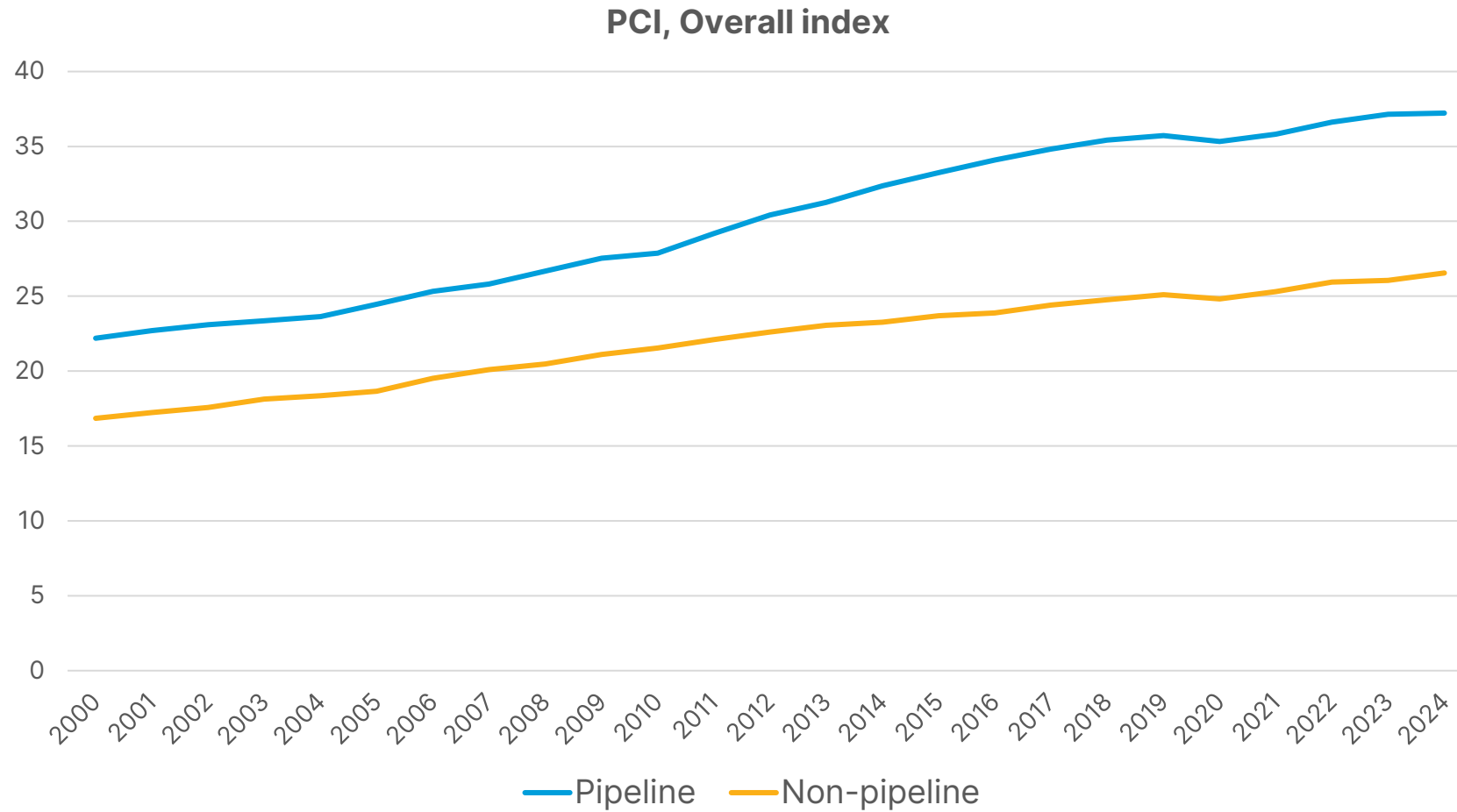




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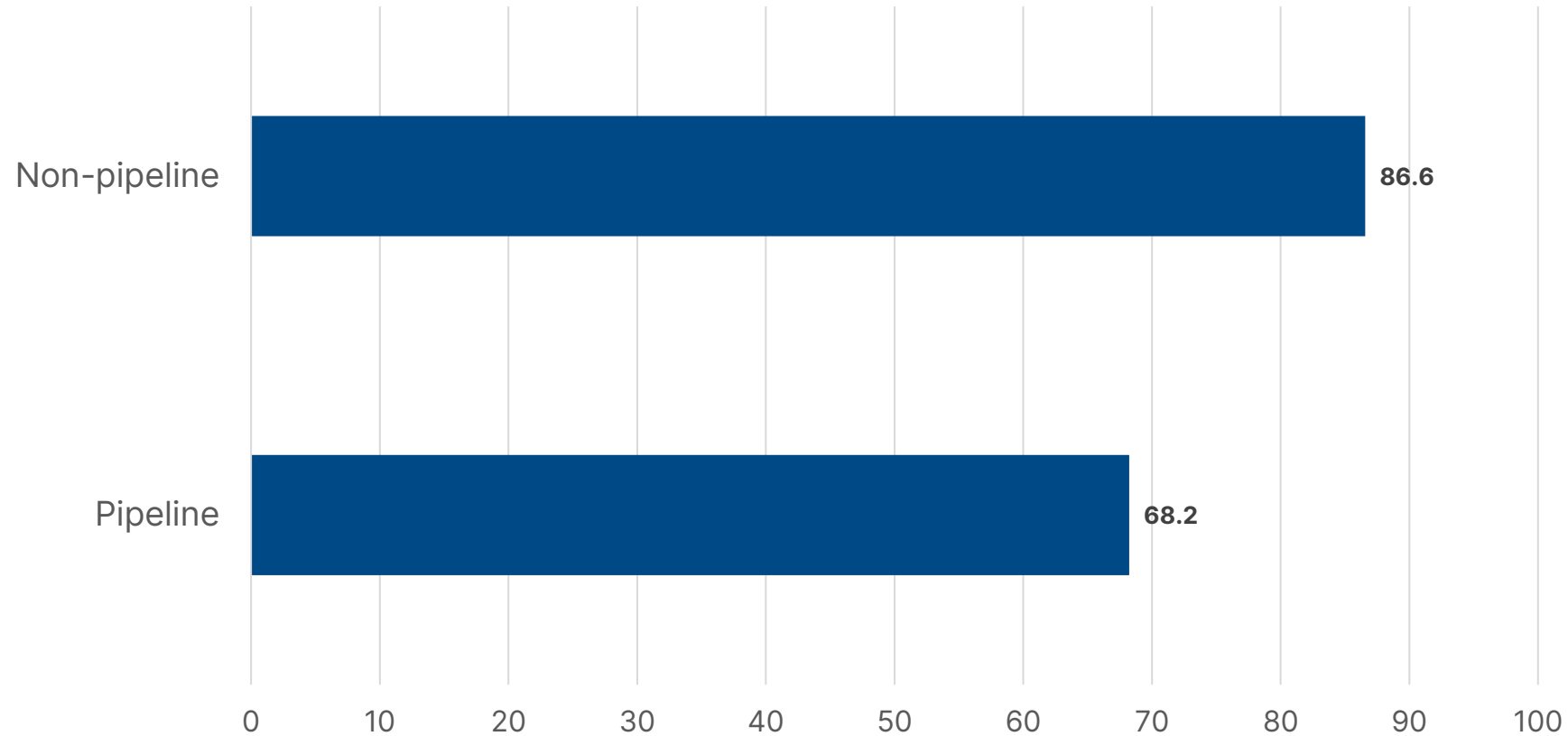
# Productive capacities: widening gap





# Commodity dependence is more deeply entrenched in non-pipeline LDCs

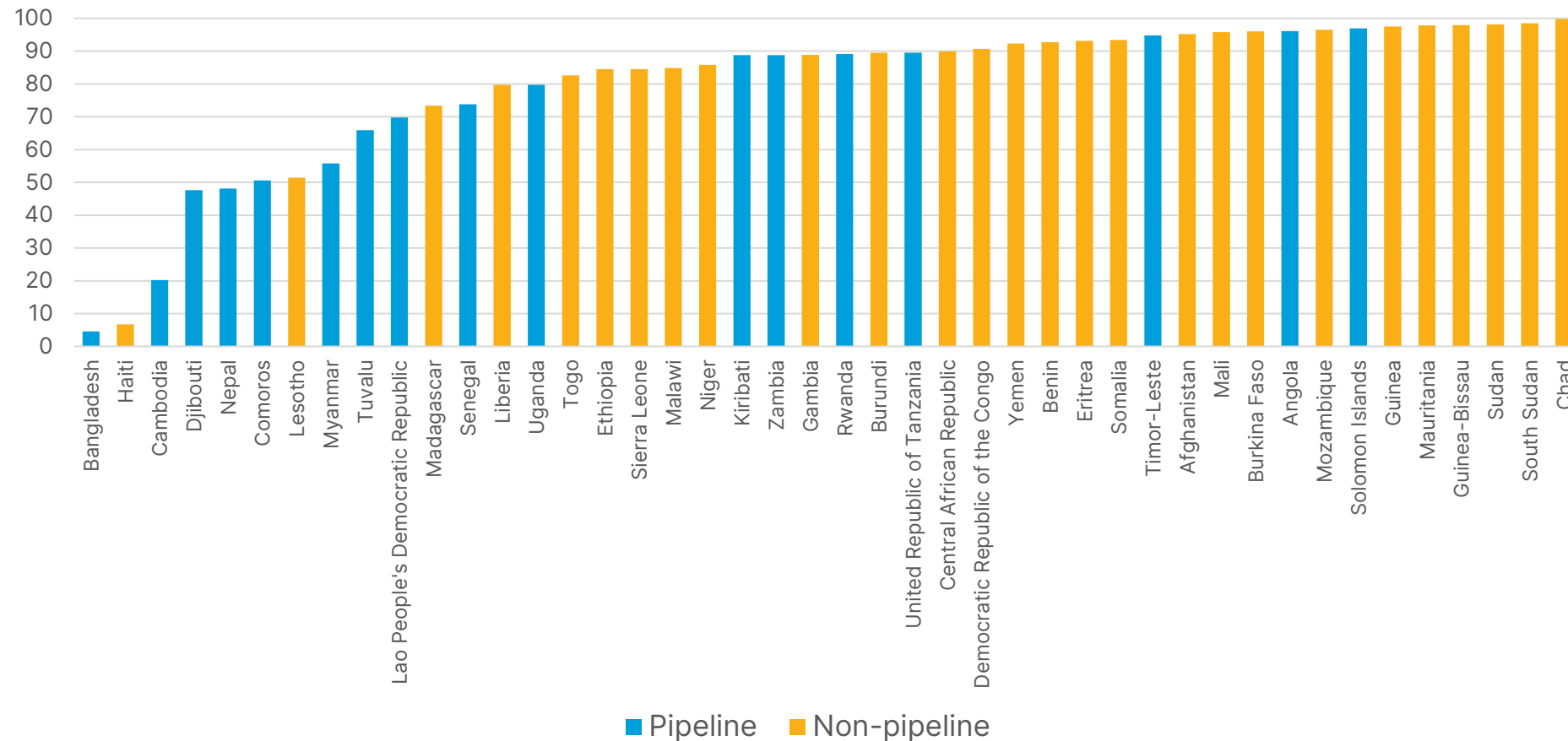
Average share of primary commodities in total merchandise exports,  
2022-2024





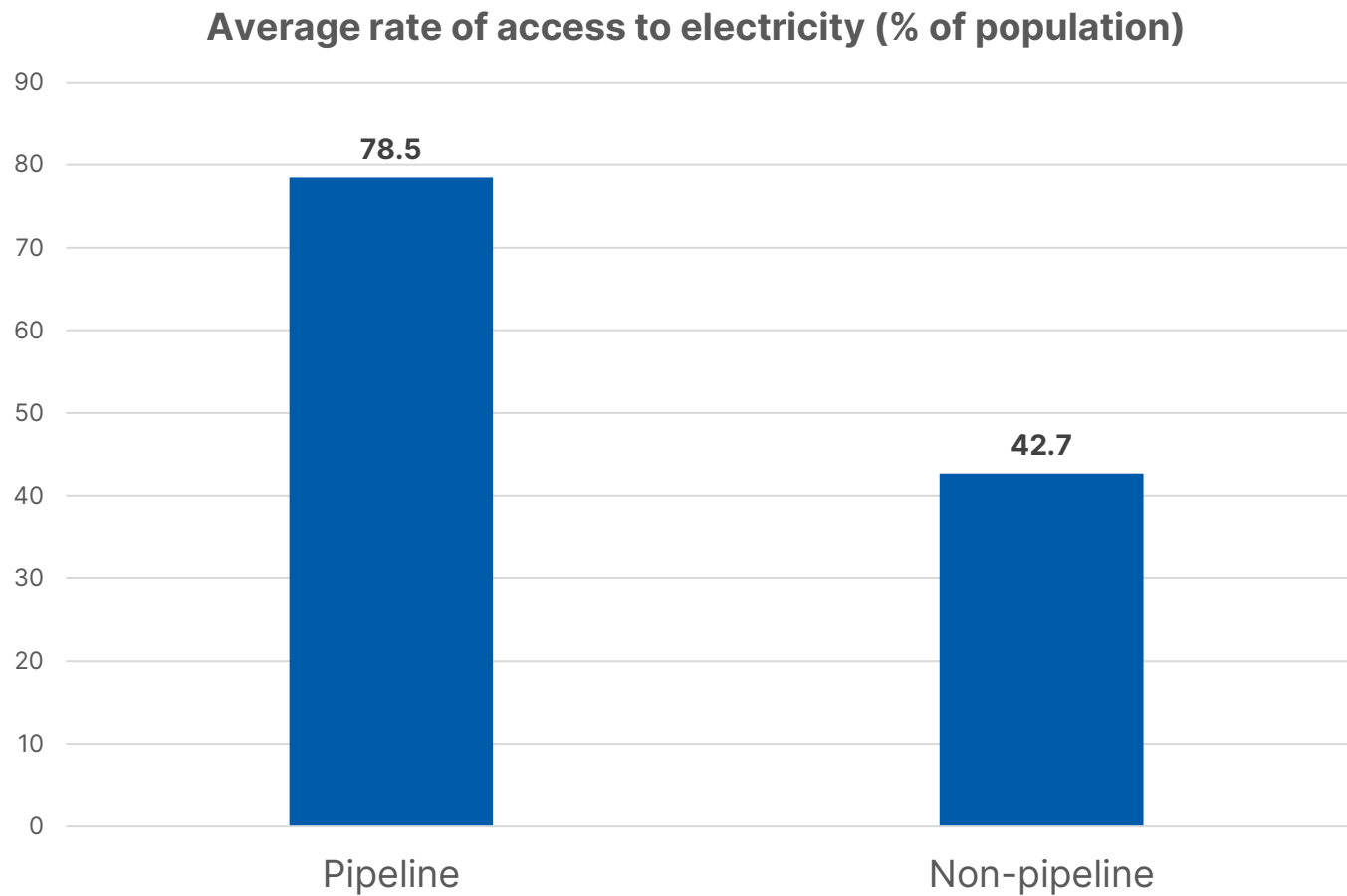
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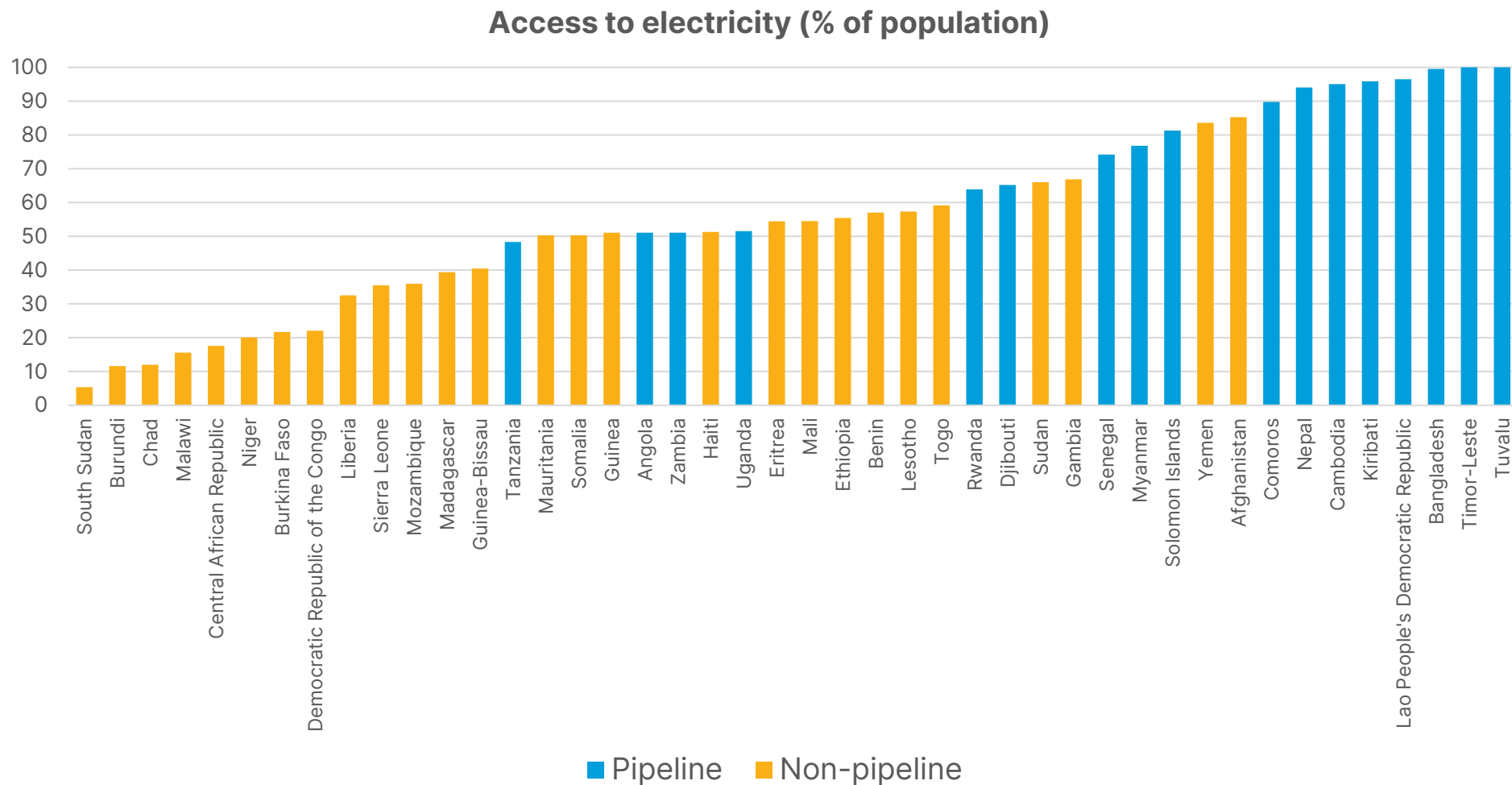


# Uneven progress on energy access among LDCs

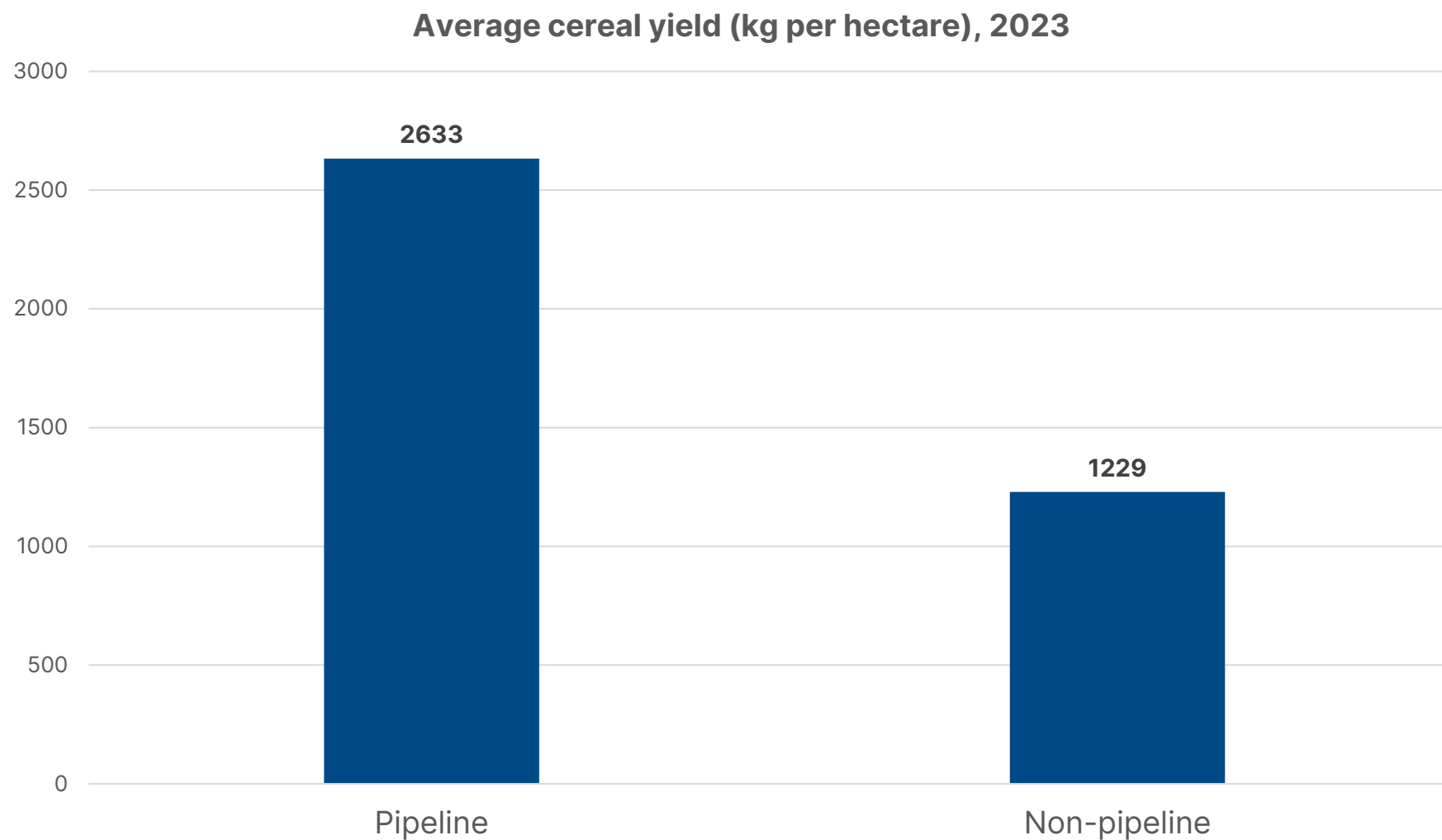




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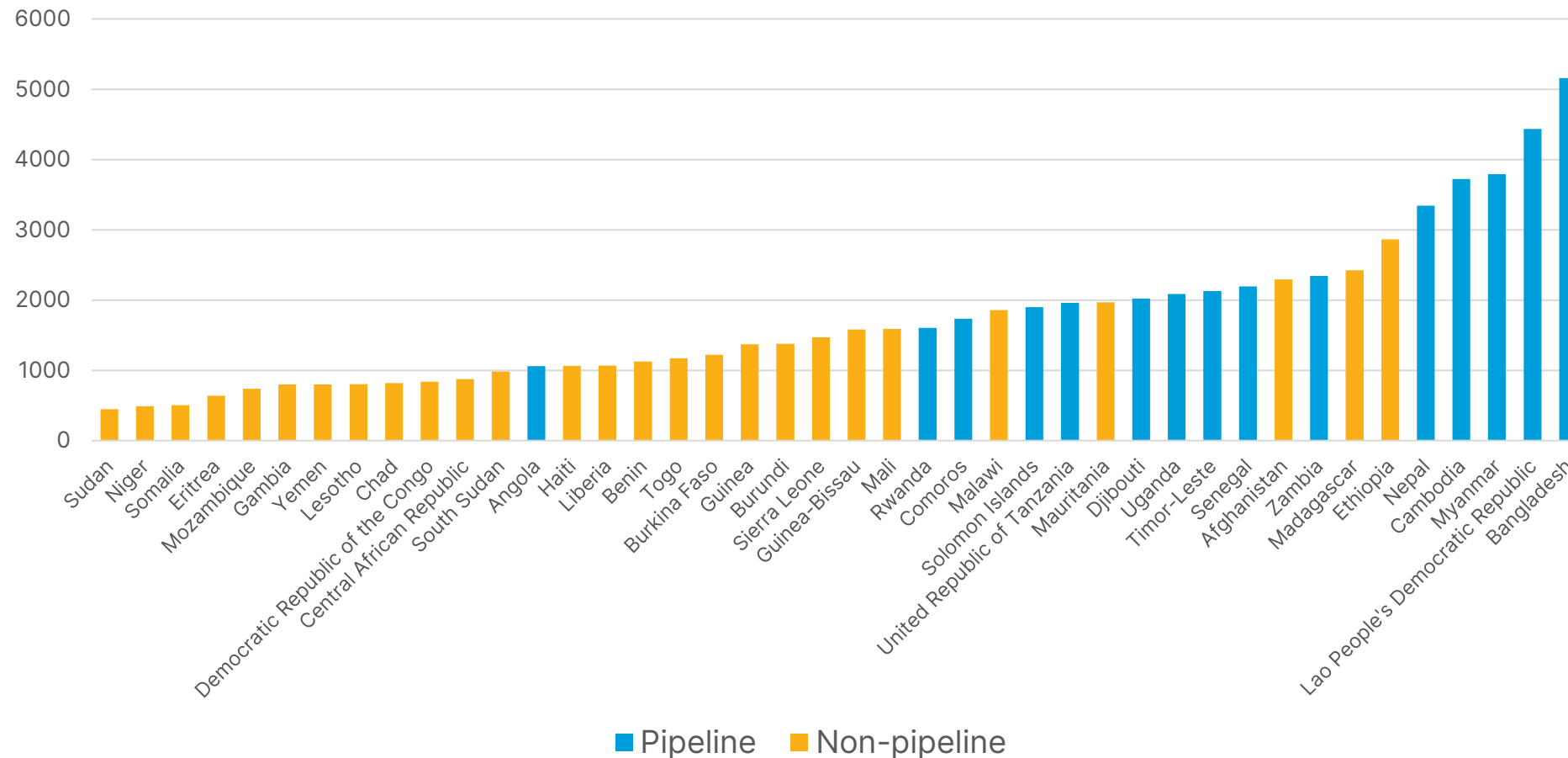
# Large gaps in agricultural productivity





# Large gaps in agricultural productivity

Average cereal yield (kg per hectare), 2023





# **Structural challenges among the 27 non-pipeline LDCs**

- ▶ 11 are LLDCs
- ▶ 11 are classified as being at high risk for debt distress and 2 currently in debt distress
- ▶ 17 are on the World Bank's list of fragile and conflict-affected situations
- ▶ 24 are classified as having low human development according to HDI

# **Key questions on the future of the LDC category**

- ▶ How can it be avoided that non-pipeline LDCs are left further behind?
- ▶ How can international support measures address persistent structural weaknesses?
- ▶ How to deal with the overlap with fragility, commodity dependence and debt distress?
- ▶ Are the non-LDCs becoming a permanent group?

# Thank you

