



**COURSE ON KEY ISSUES  
ON THE INTERNATIONAL  
ECONOMIC AGENDA**

Short courses for Permanent Missions in Geneva  
Organized by the Division on Technology and Logistics, Knowledge Development Branch  
Policy Capacity Building Section

**The process and consequences of graduation from the least developed country category**

19 May, Room XXVI  
Delivered by the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes

**PROGRAMME**

Geneva, Palais des Nations		Room XXVI
10:00 - 10:10	Welcome address by Mr. Paul Akiwumi, Director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes (ALDC)  The session will be moderated Ms. Cecilia Viscarra, Acting Project Coordinator, Policy Capacity Building Section	
10:10 - 10:45	<b>Session 1: Graduation: What it means, what it doesn't mean and how countries can best approach it</b>  Presented by Rolf Traeger	
10:45 - 11:20	<b>Session 2: What are the costs and benefits of graduation?</b>  Presented by Giovanni Valensisi	
11:20 - 11:55	<b>Session 3: How UNCTAD accompanies and assists countries in the graduation process</b>  Presented by Pierre Encontre	
11:55 - 12:10	Coffee break	
12:10 - 13:00	Q&A session	

## The process and consequences of graduation from the least developed country category

19 May, Room XXVI

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This course will discuss graduation, i.e., the process by which least developed countries (LDCs) cease to be members of the LDC category, in recognition of their advances in development. In principle, graduation marks a shift from dependence to a greater degree of self-sufficiency and an emergence from development traps that beset LDCs. However, upon graduation, the loss of access to international support measures tied to LDC status may lead to important economic costs. In the 45 years since the establishment of the category, only four countries have graduated. Projections indicate that the target that at least half of the LDCs meet the criteria for graduation by 2020 is unlikely to be met. UNCTAD suggests that graduation should be viewed as part of a longer and broader development process, and emphasizes the need for graduation with momentum.

This course will discuss the following questions:

- What is the economic meaning of graduation?
- What are the costs and benefits of graduation?
- How can countries achieve graduation with momentum?
- How can LDCs make the most of the graduation process?
- How does UNCTAD accompany and assist graduating countries in their smooth transition process?

**Rolf Traeger** is Chief of the LDC Section of UNCTAD, where he coordinates the work of research on least developed countries (LDCs) and capacity-building on development strategies and policies. He leads the team which writes UNCTAD's *Least Developed Countries Report*, which he has co-authored since 2007. He has been working since 1991 as an economist for the United Nations. During the period 1999–2006 he worked at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), where he co-authored UNECE's *Economic Survey of Europe*. His main areas of work include: sustainable development, structural transformation, technology, development strategies and policies, poverty, international trade, migration and rural development.

**Giovanni Valensisi** is Economic Affairs Officer in the LDC section, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, and is part of the team working on UNCTAD's annual *Least Developed Countries Report*. Prior to his current assignment, he worked for four years at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), where he carried out research and policy analysis on bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations, Aid for Trade, and regional integration initiatives. Before moving to Ethiopia, he worked for a number of years at UNCTAD and UNDP-Syria, and held various NGO assignments in Italy, Guatemala and Ecuador. He has authored various articles on trade policy and Africa's regional integration issues in peer reviewed journals. Mr Valensisi holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Pavia, where he was also research fellow, and an MSc in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from the University of Toulouse.

**Pierre Encontre** is Chief of the Small Island Developing States and Status Issues Section of UNCTAD's Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes. His 32-year UN career (including 26 years in UNCTAD) has been entirely devoted to countries with special needs, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS). Over the past two decades, his work in UNCTAD mainly involved advising LDC governments on the implications of graduation from LDC status, and supporting the UN bodies which are responsible for the triennial review of the UN list of LDCs. This has brought Pierre and his colleagues to closely cooperate with the governments of Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Laos, Lesotho, Myanmar, Nepal, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Tuvalu (countries pre-eligible or near pre-eligibility for graduation); Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Vanuatu (countries earmarked for graduation and in quest of a smooth transition to post-LDC status); and Botswana, Cape Verde, Maldives, and Samoa (the four ex-LDCs to date).