

UN/LDC III

Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries*

(Excerpt)

**Commitment 6:
Reducing vulnerability and
protecting the environment**

73. Long-term threats to the global environment are a common concern of all countries, and there is an urgent need to address this issue on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The LDCs are acutely vulnerable to a variety of natural shocks, including natural disasters, and severe structural handicaps, and are susceptible to global environmental phenomena such as the loss of biological diversity and adverse effects of climate change which *inter alia* exacerbates drought, desertification and sea level rise. LDCs are at present contributing the least to the emission of greenhouse gases, while they are the most vulnerable and have the least capacity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. Such vulnerabilities generate considerable uncertainties and impair the development prospects of these countries, and they tend to affect the poor most, in particular women and children. Environmental degradation in LDCs also results from poverty that deprives households, village communities or enterprises of the means and technology required to preserve the environment. Economic growth, social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities in LDCs and are themselves essential to meeting national and global sustainability objectives. Eradicating poverty is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and has to be addressed in an integrated and comprehensive manner, taking fully into account the legitimate priority needs of LDCs.

A. Protecting the environment

74. LDC-specific objectives defined in Agenda 21 and Rio + 5, as well as commitments from multilateral environmental agreements, must be the basis for actions.

75. Actions by LDCs and the development partners will be along the following lines:

(i) Actions by LDCs

- (a) Developing and implementing national strategies for sustainable development, with the assistance of development partners, so as to reverse trends in the loss of national environmental resources;
- (b) Increasing efforts to ensure integrated responses to environmental and economic constraints, in the light of country-specific environmental and economic constraints and profiles of poverty and vulnerability;
- (c) Strengthening the institutional and technological capacity to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable

development by increasing the ability of policy makers to formulate and implement relevant legislation and environmental management plans;

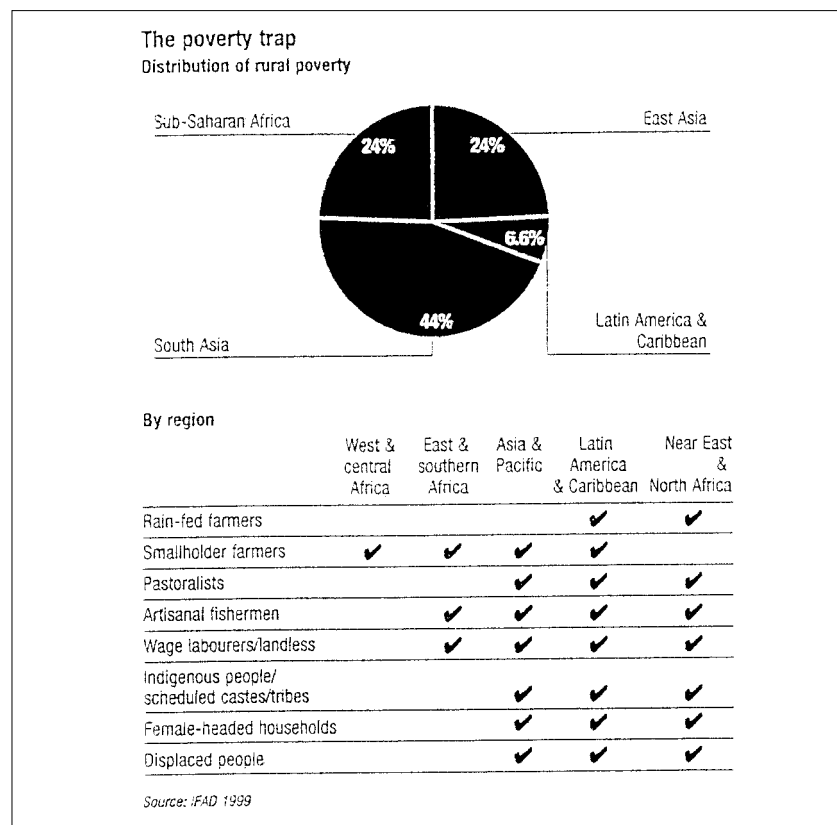
(d) Strengthening the important role of women in land and forest management and in the choice and dissemination of appropriate technology;

(e) Encouraging sensitization and advocacy activities through greater reliance on local communities and their traditional knowledge and practices, civil society and educational institutions;

(f) Building their capacity in order to be able to respond adequately to existing and new environmental challenges;

resources and facilitating and financing access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and supporting LDCs' efforts in environmental protection in the context of sustainable development;

(b) Bringing to fruition the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development by, *inter alia*, and where appropriate, granting special priority to LDCs in international support, as well as facilitating relevant actions as recommended in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and implementing mul-



Courtesy: Financial Times

(g) Identifying the special vulnerabilities and possible adaptation measures that need to be fully integrated into the country's development strategies, including development cooperation programmes.

(ii) Actions by development partners

(a) Continuing to make available financial resources from all sources, including new and additional resources on an adequate and predictable basis, technical or other

multilateral environmental agreements to which they are parties, *inter alia* the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. This involves, among other elements, financial transfers and capacity-building efforts, including for the development and dissemination of modern and non-polluting energy resources, as well as improved technology for traditional energy resources, including fuel wood, especially in rural areas;

* Adopted by the Third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries on 20 May 2001. A/CONF.191/11. See also page 206.

- (c) Renewing the international community's commitment towards LDCs to continue to support the formulation of national environmental policies, development of human resources and institutional capacities, and environmental data bases;
- (d) Supporting the strengthening of the capacity of the LDCs to participate in international environmental negotiations;
- (e) Providing assistance, through financial, technical and/or other forms of assistance, to LDCs' efforts to develop and implement national strategies for sustainable development in every country so as to reverse the current trends in the loss of national environmental resources;
- (f) Supporting the LDCs in their efforts to integrate the environmental component into national development policies and strategies;
- (g) Assisting LDCs in establishing public-private sector partnerships to address environmental challenges.

B. Alleviating vulnerability to natural shocks

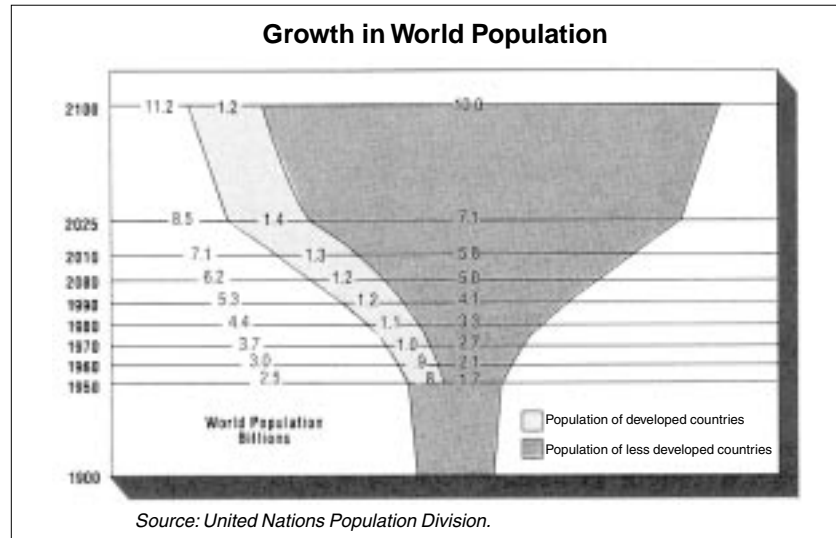
76. Post-emergency action, using effective and flexible mechanisms, must ease the transition from the emergency phase to the development phase, promote the socio-economic reintegration of the parts of population affected, remove as far as possible the causes of the crisis and strengthen institutions and ownership by local and national actors of their role in formulating a sustainable development policy. Both LDCs and development partners should encourage the involvement of the private sector, *inter alia* in the areas of disaster mitigation and disaster preparedness.

77. Actions by LDCs and the development partners will be along the following lines:

- (b) Pursuing or intensifying efforts to strengthen national early-warning and forecasting mechanisms, implementing preventive measures and sensitizing relevant parts of the population to the benefits of disaster preparedness and prevention;

- (c) Developing and implementing comprehensive disaster mitigation and preparedness, policies and actions. Such policies should also respond to prolonged disasters with a slow onset such as drought, which often has very severe economic, environmental and social impacts;
- (d) Considering the creation of innovative

- (b) Providing assistance for disaster mitigation, at the request of affected countries, as well as for improving the capacity of LDCs to identify mitigation scenarios and establishing protective measures and contingency plans;
- (c) Supporting LDCs' enhancement of capacity to effectively participate in and



Courtesy: UN

financial instruments, such as special insurance schemes, to facilitate post-disaster reconstruction with a view to maintaining standards of living and productive capacities in the LDCs.

- (ii) *Actions by development partners*
 - (a) Giving priority attention to the LDCs in the substantive programme and institutional arrangements for implementing the new International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

benefit from regional and international early-warning and disaster mitigation and response networks, including through satellite-driven technologies;

- (d) Sharing operationally useful disaster information, including satellite data, as widely as possible within the international disaster relief community, through appropriate programmes such as the UN web site ReliefWeb.

