

**The Role of the co-operative enterprise model in
implementing the Sustainable Development Goals
(SDGs) in Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**

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ABSTRACT

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are currently suffering from the decrease in demand for goods, reduction in export revenues and the fall in the prices as a result of the economic vulnerability and uncertainty triggered by the global economic crisis. How will the Cooperatives Enterprise Model be a catalyst to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in LDCs?

The 17 SDGs, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, are designed to assist the international community free the human race from hunger, poverty and oppression. It is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

LDCs are characterized by their acute susceptibility to external economic shocks, natural and man-made disasters and communicable diseases. They represent the weakest and poorest segment of the world's community. They contribute about one per cent to global trade in goods, include nearly 900 million people (about twelve per cent of the world's population) yet account for only less than two percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

While SDGs focus on all areas of sustainable development, there is a special focus on LDCs. They are considered the main countries in need of attainment of SDGs. SDG are transformational and put a focus on equality under the headline "*leaving no one behind*¹", which implies giving priority to the LDCs. The SDGs provide a broad and integrated development framework with the 2030 Agenda purposed to support the implementation of relevant strategies and programs of action. Challenges and priorities of LDCs are firmly embodied in the basic architecture of the 2030 Agenda.

It will require an extraordinary enlistment of resources to support its implementation. While their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), focused on a limited number of

¹ The commitment to 'leave no one behind' has been a key feature of all the discussions on the SDGs. The idea that 'no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone' is well established in the rhetoric around the new goals. In theory of course, this means ensuring that every individual achieves the full package of rights and opportunities the SDGs express.

specific, globally human and statistically quantifiable targets, the SDGs bring forward the unfinished business of the MDGs and go even further.

All possible resources must be organized if the world is to be successful in realizing sustainable nature of the SDGs. It is with this background in mind that the role of the Cooperative enterprise model in implementing SDGs in LDCs is explored in this paper. Given the principles of cooperatives that support communally inclusive and development promoting activities, the cooperatives sector has the possibility to contribute to the attainment of the SDGs.

ABSTRACT.....	2
I INTRODUCTION	5
II DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.....	6
1 The Post War International Systems.....	6
2 The Millennium Development Goals.....	7
3 The Sustainable Development Goals	8
4 Least Developed Countries (LDCs).....	9
4.1 State of LDCs in 2016	11
5 The Role of Cooperatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs	11
III COOPERATIVES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE.....	11
IV COOPERATIVES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PRACTICE AND EVIDENCE.....	13
CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	19
REFERENCES	20
Appendix I: THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs).....	22

I INTRODUCTION

As Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came to end in 2015, 193 member states of the United Nations, in 2015, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the period 2016–30. The 17 SDGs are more ambitious and holistic than their predecessor. While MDGs focused on reducing extreme poverty; the SDGs focus on sustainable development, meaning the holistic achievement of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Governments will need significant investments of their GDP's to realize them. Cooperatives are poised to play a role in supporting the implementation of the 17 SDGs especially in LDCs.

Although it may be too early to embark on a reflective examination of the achievements and failures of the MDGs, one thing is clear: when policies improve, it quickly becomes apparent that social mobilization is a major bottleneck to accelerating progress toward the MDGs at the country level. One can persuasively anticipate the same to happen with the SDGs. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore all options available to countries to see how they can mobilize their people towards the achievement of SDG's.

One important potential source of social mobilization that is often overlooked is co-operatives. Though co-operatives is an old industry, it is growing rapidly and has become a significant sector in many countries.

This paper begins by discussing the evolution of the concept of sustainable development, in order to provide context for an assessment of the potential role of cooperatives. The principles underlying cooperatives are then considered, and the recent contribution of cooperatives to achieving SDG's in least developed nations are then explored.

II DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The history of the SDGs can be traced to 1972 when governments met in Stockholm, Sweden, for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to consider the rights of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. It was not until 1983 that the United Nations decided to create the World Commission on Environment and Development which defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In 1992 the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio. It was here that the first agenda for Environment and Development was developed and adopted, also known as Agenda 21.

1 The Post War International Systems

Based on fears that poverty, unemployment, and dislocation would reinforce the appeal of communism to Western Europe, the United States sought to create stable conditions where democratic institutions could survive (Encyclopædia Britannica 2014). Beginning in 1948, the United States gave \$13 billion (approximately \$148 billion in current dollars) under the Marshall Plan to help rebuild European economies after WWII. The World Bank was initially established to assist European reconstruction, but then its efforts shifted to the development of Europe's remaining and former colonies (Goldman 2005). During its first twenty years, the Bank financed only the most direct investments in productive capital (i.e. roads, power plants, ports, etc.) (ibid). However, decolonization--at least 17 former colonies achieved independence in Africa in 1960--ushered in a period of increased demand for financial and technical assistance in the context of maintaining independence. That year marked a turning point in international development. The countries of the developing world, having gained independence and freed themselves of colonial rule, now also needed to free themselves of poverty. These new governments would need financial and technical assistance to speed up development, while maintaining independence; thus leading to the push for development in its more contemporary sense – a notion which, in combination with more conventional ideas of economic investment, embraced moral and humanitarian ideals. The year 1960 also marked the World Bank's establishment of a subsidiary body with an initial subscription of approximately \$900 million, the International Development Association (IDA), to provide concessional lending to the world's poorest countries.

1960 also marked the creation of the the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a forum for discussion among the developed countries of aid, development, and poverty reduction. The DAC established the official definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and set international standards on the financial terms of aid. The United Nations then came to adopt the DAC-recommended 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) as the official target for ODA for developed countries. Beginning in 1961, donor countries also began to establish aid agencies.

2 The Millennium Development Goals

The 1990s saw a series of efforts to define goals for improvements in welfare in developing countries. OECD-DAC proposed seven International Development Goals (IDGs) in 1996, drawn from agreements and resolutions of UN conferences in the first half of the 1990s. While a lack of engagement by many large donors limited the immediate impact of the IDGs, negotiations in the context of the UN General Assembly resulted in its adoption of the Millennium Declaration on September 8, 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were then established as a set of 8 goals and 21 targets, monitored through 60 indicators, to achieve progress towards the Declaration, with a target date of December 31, 2015.

The official launch of the MDGs represented a fundamental shift in development policy: it was the first time that a holistic framework to meet the world's (human) development needs had been established. A major strength of the framework derives from its focus on a limited selection of concrete, common human development targets and goals that can be monitored by statistically robust indicators. Its simplicity, transparency, and multi-dimensionality helped rally broad support for the goals, as well as a concentration of policy attention on a joint mission. The eight goals were: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger; Achieve Universal Primary Education; Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women; Reduce Child Mortality; Improve Maternal Health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; Ensure Environmental Sustainability; and Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

The world made significant progress in meeting the goals. The goal of halving extreme poverty has been met; 700 million fewer people lived in poverty in 2010 than in 1990. Access to primary education has made significant progress, with a 91% enrollment rate in developing countries in 2012, up from 77% in 1990. The number of people lacking access to safe drinking water halved,

with 2 billion people gaining access from 1990 to 2010, improving the lives of over 100 million slum dwellers. Gender equality in education was improved. Women's political participation was continued to increase. And health care became more accessible for millions of people (World Bank Development Indicators 2015).

But there was still much to be done. Many countries lagged behind, and there was considerable discrepancy within countries. Approximately 1 billion people were still living in extreme poverty. Hunger and malnutrition rose from 2007 through 2009, partially reversing prior gains. There was slow progress in reaching full and productive employment and decent work for all, in achieving environmental sustainability, and in providing basic sanitation. New HIV infections outpaced the number of people starting antiretroviral treatment. The slow progress made in reducing maternal mortality and improving maternal and reproductive health was particularly worrisome. Sub-Saharan Africa's maternal mortality ratio stood at a staggering 500/100,000 – more than double the developing world average of 240/100,000 (ibid) in 2015. Progress on many other targets was fragile and vulnerable to reversal. Monitoring and data, as well as financing and implementation had proven to be major obstacles.

3 The Sustainable Development Goals



One of the main outcomes of Rio+20 in 2012 was the agreement to launch intergovernmental processes to prepare the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), led by the United Nations. In July 2012, the UN Secretary General announced his High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) to provide recommendations and guidance on the next development framework. The HLP report of May 2013 recommended 12 universal goals, 3 to be measured by national targets, which would only be considered ‘achieved’ if they were met for all income and social groups. Such goals and targets were supported by five shifts to create the conditions and build the momentum to meet such ambitious goals: Leave no one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open, and accountable institutions for all; and forge a new global partnership. In January 2013, the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals was established and tasked with preparing a proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDGs, approved in 2015, outlined 17 goals and 169 targets. They will continue the poverty-reduction efforts of the MDGs, and indeed they call for the end of extreme poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) by 2030. Yet they go far beyond ending extreme poverty and hunger. The new goals include universal health coverage (SDG 3), universal quality education at least through secondary level (SDG 4), access to modern energy services (SDG 7), decent work for all (SDG 8), sustainable infrastructure (SDG 9), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and major efforts on environmental sustainability (in cities, SDG 11; production systems, SDG 12; climate change, SDG 13; marine ecosystems, SDG 14; and terrestrial ecosystems, SDG 15). Each of these broad goals has multiple, specific, and quantitative targets.

4 Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

LDCs² are easily identified by their acute susceptibility to external economic shocks, natural and man-made disasters and communicable diseases. They represent the weakest and poorest segment of the world’s community. They contribute about one per cent to global trade in goods, include nearly 900 million people (about twelve per cent of the world’s population) yet account for only less than two percent of the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

² The category of LDCs was officially established in 1971 by the UN General Assembly with a view to attracting special international support for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the UN family.

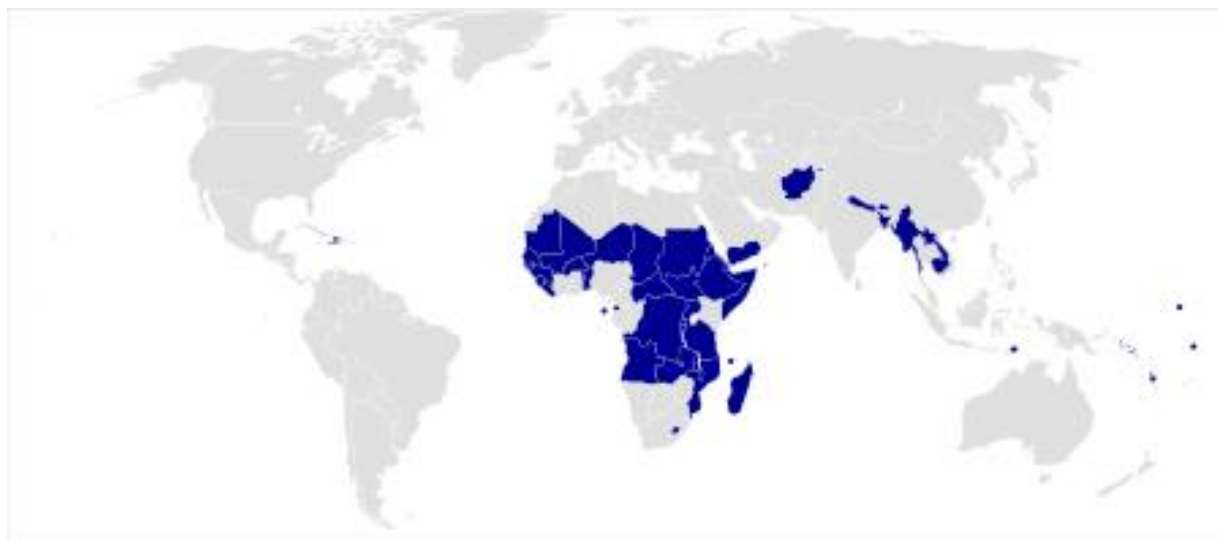
The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

As LDCs are characterized by weak human and institutional capacities, low and unequally distributed income and scarcity of domestic financial resources, they often suffer from governance crisis, political instability and, in some cases, internal and external conflicts. Their largely agrarian economies are affected by a vicious cycle of low productivity and low investment. They rely on the export of few primary commodities as major source of export and fiscal earnings, which makes them highly vulnerable to external terms-of-trade shocks. Only a handful of these countries have been able to diversify into the manufacturing sector, though with a limited range of products in labor-intensive industries, i.e. textiles and clothing.

These economic and human constraints are responsible for insufficient domestic resource mobilization, low economic management capacity, weaknesses in programme design and implementation, chronic external deficits, high debt burdens and heavy dependence on external financing that have kept LDCs in a poverty trap.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UN LDC-IV)³ held in Istanbul, Turkey, May 2011 endorsed the goal of raising half the existing LDCs out of the LDC category by 2022.

Forty eight countries (the newest member being South Sudan) make up the current list of LDCs (See Appendix I); 34 in Africa, 13 in Asia and the Pacific and 1 in Latin America.



³ The UN LDC are held every ten years. Paris has played host to the first two in 1981 and 1991. The third was held in Brussels in 2001.

Chart I: Map of the world showing various emphasized locations of LDC's (Source: http://fifthworld.wikia.com/wiki/Least_Developed_Countries)

4.1 State of LDCs in 2016

LDCs have shown positive changes, however challenges continue with new threats and uncertainties intimidating development gains. This is contained in a report published by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) in New York on 13 September 2016.

UN-OHRLLS State of Least Developed Countries 2016 Report shows how progress towards advancement away from LDC status has faired. Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tuvalu are in the process of graduation from LDC status. Volatile commodity prices, major natural disasters remain risks and uncertainties that continue to hamper the transition for many LDCs.

5 The Role of Cooperatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

Given the scale of funding requirements, realization of sustainable development has continued to require “significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing” (UN undated: 3) and require engagement of different stakeholders including governments, cooperatives, businesses, financial institutions, civil society and nonprofits.

The extent to which the private and financial industry sector in general, and cooperatives in particular, can contribute to sustainable development will depend on both the economic returns on these projects and their orientation towards social and environmental issues. While there is an increasing global awareness that private firms should consider environmental, social and governance issues in the decision making process (Caplan et. al. 2013), contribution to environmental, social and governance goals will depend on whether steps are taken to assimilate these in their operations.

III COOPERATIVES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A Cooperative is an organization of producers, consumers, or both, formed and exploited by members, who provide necessary raw materials and produce and sometimes buy the final product

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

(Van Niekerk 1982:45–46). Cooperatives empower their members. They are structured on a socialist fundamentalism and in some quarters are regarded as an alternative to a market system. They are communal and developmental in nature, can thrive in tough environments (Kanyane 2009:1124), and are clearly needed in a poverty-ridden country that is characteristic of LDCs. Girded by the necessary support, they can serve as value-adding models for socioeconomic development, contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country.

A Cooperative is defined by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) as

“An autonomous association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprises.”

Cooperatives have voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training, and information; cooperation with other cooperatives; and concern for community. Cooperative principles build on values of self-help, responsibility, accountability, and members’ belief in ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, solidarity, and caring for others.

Cooperatives have been more resilient to the deepening global economic and jobs crisis than other economic actors. They are distinct vehicles for effective service delivery, empower people to improve their quality of life, maximize economic opportunities through self-help initiatives, and developmentally favor the poor. According to the ILO,

“Cooperative enterprises across all sectors and regions are relatively more resilient to...market shocks than their capital- centered counterparts”.

The world’s 300 largest cooperative enterprises have share of revenues totaling USD 1.6 trillion, which are comparable to the GDP of the world’s tenth largest economy - Spain. About one billion people around the world are directly and indirectly involved in Cooperatives in some way, either as members / customers, as employees / participants, or both. Cooperatives employ just under 100 million people worldwide with nearly half of the world’s population livelihoods safeguarded by cooperative enterprises around the world. Cooperatives’ shares of the world market in insurance and dairy products are 25 percent and 33 percent respectively.

Cooperatives principles are interlinked, integrated, indivisible, and are universally applicable regardless of national realities, capacities and priorities. They are able to effectively contribute to SDG economic, social and environmental dimensions because they are enterprises that endeavor to meet the economic progress of members while protecting the environment and satisfying members sociocultural needs. They offer an unconventional model for social enterprise, with contributions to sustainable development that goes beyond economic growth and employment creation. The promotion and establishment of Cooperatives in LDCs could be an important instrument for achieving the SDGs as they share in GDP.

IV COOPERATIVES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PRACTICE AND EVIDENCE

While LDCs are characterized by weak human and institutional capacities, low and unequally distributed income and scarcity of domestic financial resources, a life cycle for Cooperatives (formation, growth, reorganization or exit), as they adapt to a changing economic environment characterized by technological change, industrialization of agriculture and growing individualism is taking place around the world in non-LDC countries

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

No	SDG	Probable and Current role of Co-operatives to achieve SDG	Examples in various Countries
1.	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives enable extrication from poverty by creating or sustaining bonding and bridging social capital. • They promote capital circulation in the local economy, strengthening existing businesses for the benefit of communities. • Empower farmers to negotiate for better agricultural inputs and produce prices. • SACCo's help Members access finance to meet their financial needs. • Provide jobs and livelihoods for millions of people around the world, and, together with small and medium-sized enterprises, are the most significant source of new employment (ILC, 2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SACCo model in many countries has enabled members receive loans to support their own self-employment through retail small and medium enterprises and agricultural endeavors. • Sixty years ago, the Basque region was the poorest area of Spain. Today, thanks to the Cooperative culture, it is the wealthiest. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Basque region is considered one of the wealthiest areas in the entire European Union.
2.	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers in Cooperatives are able to secure more efficient methods of farming. • Cooperatives today have a global market share of nearly thirty two per cent of the agricultural sector. • Agricultural Cooperatives in LDCs have enabled farmers overcome challenges ranging from access to local and foreign markets, access to high quality seeds, access to cheap loans, lack of transport and other infrastructural gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Tanzania, agricultural cooperatives have created access of agricultural products like maize, milk and coffee. It has meant cooperative members enjoy grass roots decision making, advice on loans, timely payments (so that farmers have funds before planting), enhanced transparency and fees for education of their children and in Ethiopia, over 900,000 people in the agricultural sector are estimated to generate a significant portion of their income directly and indirectly from Cooperatives. • In Western Cameroon, the COOVALAIF Dairy Farmer Cooperative continues to contribute to food security and better family income. In 2008, average family household incomes were \$ 430 and had risen to \$ 3 000 in 2012 (Heifer, 2012)
3.	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Health Cooperative Organization estimates that there are more than 100 million households worldwide that are served by health cooperatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Canada, there are more than one hundred healthcare Cooperatives in the healthcare business across the country. These touch millions of citizens every day.

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

No	SDG	Probable and Current role of Co-operatives to achieve SDG	Examples in various Countries
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Columbia, the second largest national employer is a healthcare Cooperative that serves about twenty five per cent of the population. • In Japan, more than one hundred and twenty five Cooperatives operate in the health sector to bring medical care to the country's growing population. • In Turkey, pharmacies today offer high quality services through a Cooperative that imports and supplies genuine and affordable medicine.
4.	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality education to Members is a principle of Cooperatives. • In many LDCs, SACCo loans have enabled children of Members access good quality education and thus promoted lifelong learning opportunities for generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many SACCo's in Kenya, the most popular back office loan is the Education Loan to Members. Similar findings have been found for countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Cape Verde and Uganda. • In Ghana and Ethiopia, rebates from fair trade have been used by Cooperatives to finance social projects including supporting the social infrastructure of primary schools. • In Tanzania, cooperatives have established quality education institutions in remote areas.
5.	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality in Cooperatives is a universal value practiced and lived by all Cooperatives. • Female Membership in Cooperatives is growing with access to leadership open and not discriminated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Enugu State, Nigeria – Women in Co-operatives were found to have saved more and repaid their loans from a Cooperative. • In Uganda, women participation in Agricultural Cooperatives is increasing faster than men. • In Greece and Mali, women have formed Cooperatives in response to a need to sell agro-tourism and get good prices for their agricultural produce respectively. • In Tanzania and Sri Lanka, women have been empowered to take leadership positions in Cooperatives.

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

No	SDG	Probable and Current role of Co-operatives to achieve SDG	Examples in various Countries
6.	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperatives are becoming players in the water sector in rural areas of many LDCs. In some cities, Cooperatives (utilities owned by their consumers) are in charge of water supply and sanitation service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Philippines, Cooperatives manage the water supply system to all neighborhoods. In India, over 14,000 households are served water by 70 Cooperatives. In Bolivia, SAGUAPAC in Santa Cruz is the largest consumer cooperative utility in the world. According to the World Bank, its performance indicators place it among the best water utilities in Latin America.
7.	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative industries are contributing to sustainable energy goals of energy access, energy efficiency and reduced emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cooperatives in the Basque region (Spain) are now a leading source of alternative energy such as wind power, fuel cells, and solar panels.
8.	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About one billion people around the world are directly and indirectly involved in Cooperatives in some way, either as members / customers, as employees / participants, or both. Cooperatives employ just under 100 million people worldwide with nearly half of the world's population livelihoods safeguarded by cooperative enterprises around the world. Cooperatives are more resilient and perform better during financial and economic crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world's 300 largest cooperative enterprises have share revenues totaling USD 1.6 trillion, which are comparable to the GDP of the world's tenth largest economy - Canada.
9.	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperatives' shares of the world market in insurance and dairy products are 25 percent and 33 percent respectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cooperatives in the Basque region (Spain) hold 716 patents for inventions. One of their businesses produced the first computer chips in Spain. They also make elevators (Orona), high-quality bicycles used by Olympic racers (Orbea), small and large appliances (Fagor), car parts, packaging materials, and numerous other products. One of the Mondragón construction companies built the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Their level of skill and quality control are second to none.
10.	Reduce inequality within and among countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality in Cooperatives is a universal value practiced and lived by all Cooperatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACCo's play a significant role in poverty reduction: In Rwanda, members Motorcycle

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

No	SDG	Probable and Current role of Co-operatives to achieve SDG	Examples in various Countries
			Taxi Drivers Cooperative guarantee each other for loans and obtained their own motorcycles thus becoming self-sufficient and reducing inequality among the Members.
11.	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Cooperatives are mobbing to provide housing solutions for their Members. • The settlements by Cooperatives conform to regulations set out by various Governments wherever Cooperatives operate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kenya, the National Housing Cooperative Union has been at the center of the slum upgrading program alongside financing Cooperatives to facilitate their Members access affordable Housing. • In Ghana, Ethiopia and South Africa, Cooperatives have used rebates from Fairtrade to sink boreholes and establish local Cooperative groups to sustain the boreholes.
12.	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives are leading the adoption of renewable energy like solar, wind power etc around the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the USA, rural electrification cooperatives, that are owned by consumers, supply ten per cent of the nation's total kilowatt consumed to twelve per cent of the total population and covers seventy five per cent of the land mass. • In Germany, more than 430 energy Cooperatives were registered between 2006 and 2011. • In the UK, a Cooperative is selling charcoal and briquettes made from recycled paper using an aerobic digester to power the factory.
13.	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
14.	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
15.	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives have found ways to address depletion of natural resources through education and involvement of its Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest cooperatives in Indonesia promote sustainable use of tropical hardwood.

The Role of Co-operatives in Achieving SDGs in LDCs

No	SDG	Probable and Current role of Co-operatives to achieve SDG	Examples in various Countries
	ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	in sustaining the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Colombia, waste pickers are formally organized under Cooperatives.
16.	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives have “<i>positive social capital</i>” fostering a strong sense of community, participation, empowerment and inclusion among Members and restoring interpersonal relationships and peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Nepal, to South Sudan, India and Lebanon, Cooperatives have been the means through which warring factions have come together to work and live harmoniously.
17.	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Strengthening the means of implementation of SDGs in LDCs by Cooperatives and considering a global partnership between the UN and Cooperatives for sustainable development will be key to enable the desired comprehensive approach towards achieving the SDGs to be realized.

When emphasizing the means of implementation, Cooperatives will be useful in initiating the inclusive and participatory process in all LDCs because raising awareness of the SDGs and engaging stakeholder collaboration to achieve the goals and targets is the only way to realize the SDGs in LDCs. Cooperatives have the potential to translate each SDGs into an ambitious yet realistic agenda that is tailored to the local development context as its principles and values are universal.

Involve Cooperatives in SDGs monitoring and evaluation. This would ensure SDGs implementation remains on track, and develops both ownership and local capacity for more responsive and accountable results in all LDCs.

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Appendix I: THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)

Africa (34 countries)

1	Angola	18	Madagascar
2	Benin	19	Malawi #
3	Burkina Faso #	20	Mali #
4	Burundi #	21	Mauritania
5	Central African Republic #	22	Mozambique
6	Chad #	23	Niger #
7	Comoros *	24	Rwanda #
8	Democratic Republic of the Congo	25	São Tomé and Príncipe *
9	Djibouti	26	Senegal
10	Equatorial Guinea	27	Sierra Leone
11	Eritrea	28	Somalia
12	Ethiopia #	29	South Sudan #
13	Gambia	30	Sudan
14	Guinea	31	Togo
15	Guinea-Bissau *	32	Uganda #
16	Lesotho #	33	United Republic of Tanzania
17	Liberia	34	Zambia #

Asia Pacific (13 countries)

1	Afghanistan #	8	Nepal #
2	Bangladesh	9	Solomon Islands *
3	Bhutan #	10	Timor-Leste *
4	Cambodia	11	Tuvalu *
5	Kiribati *	12	Vanuatu *
6	Lao People's Democratic Republic #	13	Yemen
7	Myanmar		

Latin America and the Caribbean (1 country)

1	Haiti *
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* Also a Small Island Developing State

Also a Landlocked Developing Country